DOCUMENTA MISSIONALIA - 9

EVANGELISATION

EDITED BY M. DHAVAMONY S. J.

C. M. Martini	Il Vocabolario dell'annuncio nella Bibbia.
D. Grasso	Evangelizzazione. Senso di un termine.
M. Flick - Z. Alszeghy	L'evangelizzazione come comunicazione.
R. Latourelle	Evangélisation et témoignage.
P. Nemeshegyi	Evangelization and the sacraments.
R. Faricy	Evangelization and spiritual life.
J. López-Gay	Evolución histórica de la « Evangelización ».
J. Witte	Ecumenism and evangelization.
M. Dhavamony	Evangelization and inter-religious dialogue.
J. L. Carroll	Evangelization and development.
H. Carrier	Pourquoi l'Eglise a besoin d'Universités.
J. Shih	L'evangelizzazione della Cina di oggi.
J. B. Lotz	Evangelisation im Lichte der Philosophie.
J. de Finance	L'Athéisme, problème majeur de l'évangélisation.
G. Wetter	Evangelisation und Marxismus.

UNIVERSITÀ GREGORIANA EDITRICE - ROMA 1975

DOCUMENTA MISSIONALIA - 9
FACULTAS MISSIOLOGICA - PONT. UNIVERSITAS GREGORIANA

EVANGELISATION

EDITED BY MARIASUSAI DHAVAMONY S. J.

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UNIVERSITÀ GREGORIANA EDITRICE - ROMA - 1975

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PREFACE

When the Gospel Message came into the world it began by proclaiming events. The first discourse of evangelization (Acts 2.22 ff) has the basic content: « Jesus, whom you have crucified, did God raise up; whereof we are witnesses. God, however, hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. » Events cannot be proved in a system of rational thought but can only be attested and depend on the testimony of the witnesses in order to be accepted by others. The event here in question is the new reality that has come in Christ, the kingdom of God which has come in Him, the reality of which is revealed only in faith. Preaching long ago at the site of the crucifixion, Cyril of Jerusalem spoke of « this hill of Golgotha » as « the pivot of the world ». There « God stretched forth His hands upon the Cross to embrace the utmost limits of the world ». This account of the Cross and the world points to the reality that is something completely new and different, and has no analogy in the world. It is not here simply a question of a new kind of religion that transcends others, or of an idea of God more elevated than other ideas of God, or of an ideology that meets the needs of men more than others. The fact of the crucified and risen Christ has brought to the world something altogether new and one should not forget that it is within the progressive proclamation of Christ that the Christian Community seeks its identity and mission. The newness of the good news of what God has done for men in Christ constitutes the specific and original character of Christianity.

It is to the Church that Christ gives the mandate to proclaim and to live the Gospel Message. « As the Father has sent me, even so send I you » (John 20.21). This mandate is given not only to the disciples but to all those who believe in Jesus Christ and constitute his Church. In other words it is the whole

Church as a body that is called to bear witness to the Gospel Message. When the third assembly of the Synod of bishops that gathered in 1974 took up the theme of evangelization in the world today, it was evident that the Synod was tackling a problem that is central to its existence and mission; namely, the mandate which she received from Christ to evangelize all men; the Synod began to realize that the deeper and more widespread the contemporary changes appear in religion, culture, ideology and mores, the more evident and urgent becomes the need to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and every man.

During the Synodal discussions the following traits emerged, which are indicative of the concerns and preoccupations of the churches in different continents. Africa is marked by the desire to make the Church more rooted in indigenous culture. Over a long period of growth the Church has taken root in Africa and the African Churches are beginning to examine the heritage of the Christian Faith to see how pertinently it related to African thought, ideas and life in a rapidly changing situation. Latin America seeks to safeguard and promote the values of a Christianity massively popular by deepening the link which unites the Gospel to the efforts of human liberation and progress. Asia wishes to discover more deeply the traces of God's action in the ancient great living religions which are adhered to by the vast majority of the peoples of this immense continent which contains sixty percent of the world's population. North America and Western Europe are anxious to find a more relevant image of the Church in the context of an increasing number of people who are becoming alienated from the Gospel Message or indifferent to it in their search for the true meaning of life, while in Eastern Europe Christians suffer on account of lack of religious liberty inscribed in the rights of man.

Studying the problems of evangelization structurally, we first attempt to understand the meaning of the term 'evangelization'. Fr Carlo M. Martini, researching on the biblical vocabulary of 'announcing', notes that, the Bible being the book which contains divine revelation, the theme of announcing in the religious context is present in diverse forms. Since the theme of announcing is strictly connected with that of the word of God, the act of announcing takes many forms and assumes also a proper terminology according to different contexts and to different ways in which is announced the word of God, of the person who announces, and of the specific object of the announcing. Although there is a certain linguistic continuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament, the latter makes a new contribution to the content of the terms used and provides a formation of a new vocabulary to indicate the transmission of the Christian message.

Fr D. Grasso examines the meaning of the term 'evangelization', which has become current in the last ten years from the time of the Vatican II up to the time of the Bishops' Synod in 1974. After outlining the signification of the term as used by the Protestant authors who were the first to use it, he studies the various Conciliar documents in which the term has no determinate sense; for it indicates not only the first proclamation of Christ to non-Christians but also the whole ministry of the Word and the whole mission of the Church. This last sense appears especially in the Decree Ad Gentes. *The same meaning is found more or less in the official documents after the Council, i.e., in the Episcopal Conference of Italy, in the International Theological Congress of Nagpur in India, in the preparatory documents sent by the CELAM for the Synod. Finally after analysing the meaning of the term in the preparatory documents for the Synod and those of the Synod itself, the author explains the causes that led to the adoption of the term to indicate the whole mission of the Church.*

Frs M. Flick and Z. Alszeghy study the question of evangelization as communication. In the answers sent by the Episcopal Conferences from all over the world to the working paper elaborated in preparation for the Synod of bishops in 1974, it was evident that there was a tendency to identify evangelization not with the proclamation of the Gospel but with the whole activity of the Church, in as much as this involves that men become disciples of Christ. This broadening of the concept of evangelization was rendered possible, thanks to the application of conceptual models elaborated within the analysis of the phenomenon of 'communication'. From an initial communal life, through a contact that is realized in a complex network of reciprocal influences, one passes on to a personal communion between Christ and those who are called to be his disciples. The unity of this richly structured communication uncovers

itself across the category of the 'personal causality' of Christ, realizing itself in the ecclesial communion.

We are fortunate to have the authoritative and valuable contributions of these three Fathers not only because of their competence in the subject-matter of their articles, as is the case with the other authors in this volume, but also because of their close association with the work done both before and during the general assembly of the Synod. Fr Grasso acted as the special secretary of the theological section of the Synod, while Frs Flick and Alszeghy collaborated very closely with the work of the Secretariate for the Synod.

Closely linked with the preaching of the Gospel which must have the central place in evangelization is the testimony of life, a testimony that is illustration and sign. Fr Latourelle studies the theme of testimony, which is already present everywhere in the texts of the Vatican II, and has gained a new importance at the Synod in the context of evangelization. He attempts a theology of testimony in the light of the original revelation in Jesus Christ, Witness of the Father, and of evangelization, conceived as a participation of the Church in the testimony of Christ. After a historical inquiry into the use of the term 'testimony', at the Council and the Synod, he makes a semantic and phenomenological analysis of testimony in the profane and biblical context, and makes a theological reflexion on the relations that distinguish and unite the closely connected notions of revelation, evangelization and testimony; and makes a pastoral reflection on the chances and risks of contemporary testimony, as well as on the specific traits which it ought to embody. He concludes his study with the treatment of the decisive role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian testimony.

Fr P. Nemeshegyi studies the relationship between evangelization and the sacraments. Evangelization is the permanence of Christ's witness to the love of his Father and to the truth of man. Being an action of the Risen Lord, it is accompanied by his Spirit and leads up to the 'hour of grace'. This 'hour of grace' is expressed by the sacraments, mainly by the Eucharist, where Christ gives us his personal self, and by baptism, where Christ washes us in order to admit us to his table, in which, through personal, symbolic causality, the grace of christification is offered to man's innermost being. The

gracious efficacy of the word of evangelization derives ultimately from the Word, incarnate, dead, risen, giving himself to us as our food. Through the reception of the sacraments man joins, in body and soul, the community of Christ's disciples, is admitted to their liturgy and is entrusted with their mission.

Evangelization is a supernatural work which depends on the gift of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. This demands constant inner conversion of the individual members and continual renewal of our communities, which is the only way of becoming more credible as witnesses of the faith. This entails solid interior life of prayer, meditation, contemplation, nourished and sustained by the participation in the sacraments. Fr Robert Faricy considers the object of evangelization, seen particularly in terms of the processes of the spiritual life, and the conditions that need to be fulfilled for evangelization to be effective, to reach man's heart, to touch his interior self. These conditions are: that evangelization be in dialogue; that it be in response to those cultural trends and human aspirations that mark the contemporary world; and that it be credible: presented as to-be-believed, and presented by a Church represented in a local Christian community that lives in faith what it asserts in faith.

Fr J. López-Gay studies the missiological concept of evangelization in its historical perspective, starting with the XVI century. The word 'evangelization' did not appear then; terms such as 'preaching', 'propagation of faith', 'announcing the Gospel' were current. Evangelization was viewed in its soteriological aspect, as necessary for faith and salvation. The signs of evangelical life must accompany the proclamation. Discussions about the juridical and soteriological aspects of evangelization obscured its christological and ecclesiological meaning. In the middle of the XIX Century the word 'evangelization' came into the missiological vocabulary. « The evangelization of the world in this generation » became the watchword of many Congresses and Movements. Now the christological and ecclesiological aspects of evangelization became more evident, as this activity is the essential task of the Church itself. In the beginning of the XX Century came the word 'evangelism' to indicate the new charismatic dimension. After the second

World War the term lost part of its ecclesiological dimension and took on a more anthropological perspective.

Fr J. Witte treats of ecumenism and evangelization. In the face of the bewildering problems of the ever more real world-wideness of our relationships, the Church of Christ has to be open more than before to the world and to the future, but always in faithfulness to the saving design of God, revealed in human history.

To guarantee this faithfulness *Christ gave to His Church its* « ecumenicity », *i.e. the power to conserve, or to heal, the given unity in the plurality of Church-traditions, springing from so many different social, cultural and historical circumstances.*

To guarantee this openness *to the world and to the eschatological future, Christ gave to His Church its* « catholicity », *i.e. the dynamic power to proclaim the Gospel-message to all peoples in all times, compelling this evangelization to the right accommodation of the message to every culture, making it fully credible through the penetration of these cultures with its proper fulness of grace and truth, reflecting the one and total fulness of Christ. So ecumenicity and catholicity are intrinsically connected, not only in their supernatural reality (as correlated aspects of the fulness of Christ), but also in their earthly realizations in the different Churches. The right balance of ecumenicity and catholicity has, in principle, been given to the R. C. Church. That is her great strength in the ecumenical movement, as well as in the dialogue with the whole world.*

Though she may be tempted to retreat behind her apparently save boundaries (but isn't it only « apparently »?), she has to have the courage to face actual challenges, simply because she has to be faithful to her vocation as the unique, though not exclusive, Church for the salvation of the whole world.

Holy Spirit's action overflows the bounds of the Christian Community and this impels the Christian to engage in dialogue with other religious traditions. Fr M. Dhavamony inquires into the nature and scope of the inter-religious dialogue and shows its intimate relation to evangelization. Both dialogue and evangelization pertain to the integral activity of the Church and belong to the integral vision of the Christian in his approach to the men of other faiths. Dialogue gives the opportunity for the Gospel to shine in its own light, unobscured by human

arguments and ' rational refutations ', and enables the Christian to achieve a deeper understanding of the Gospel's newness and of the fullness of revelation in Christ, and ' to show thereby the salvific truth of God's love which fulfils itself in Jesus Christ '.

While emphasizing the eschatological dimension of the salvation announced in evangelization, this dimension throws new light on man's earthly reality and has a bearing on all aspects of human life, individual and social. Hence the problem of evangelization and development. Fr J. Carroll presents economic development as one aspect of a much broader process of ' rationalization ' — understood as the transition from a society guided by tradition to one guided by experimental reason — which process has important implications also for the ideological, social, moral and religious areas of life. Emphasis is placed on the strains and conflicts frequently generated in those areas by the rationalization process, and the challenges which they pose for the Church in its effort to communicate the Gospel Message to a society which is passing through this crisis. Some reflections of the author, based mainly on the experience of the Philippine Church, suggest ways in which the Church may respond creatively to the challenges.

Fr H. Carrier asks in his article why the Church needs Universities and outlines the precise function of the Catholic University and its specific role in the contemporary society. It consists essentially in an integration of knowledge in the light of the Christian Message. The Catholic University can also render an indispensable service to the Church for the following reasons: (1) The Church ought to be present in the socio-pedagogical changes that are taking place: teaching in distance, educational technology, planned teaching, etc. Through collaboration in these new experiences, Catholics seek to establish a valid conception of man and of society. (2) A second sociological reason for the need of Catholics to be present in the University is that they ought to make their influence felt in the vast programmes of research, which will be translated into scientific policies of great importance for the actual orientation of the social, economic and cultural life. He concludes his article by remarking that the University is a privileged place of influence in which Catholics with intelligence ought to know how to make the values of the Gospel penetrate their milieu.

Speaking of evangelization in the contemporary world, one cannot afford to forget China. Fr J. Shih deals with the question of the evangelization of the China of today. An ecumenical Colloquium on « Christian Faith and The Chinese Experience » was held in Louvain from 9 to 14 September, 1974. It was one stage in an ongoing study of China in a theological perspective. At a seminar in Båstad, Sweden, in January, 1974, background documents were discussed and final plans were made for it.

The present paper bases itself on the same background papers. It discusses, however, the questions that are beyond the scope of the ecumenical Colloquium, such as the following: (1) Is salvation possible at all under the actual conditions of China? (2) What role does the Church still have to play in the salvation of the Chinese people? (3) How is the Gospel of Christ to be announced to the Chinese of today?

Evangelization always respects the personal values of man. Fr J. Lotz elaborates the formal and material conditions of evangelization. Under the formal aspect is sought out a way between a coercive imposition and a purely informative presentation of the Message; namely, the solution consists in the subjective truth, rendered one's own with the total engagement of the person, in which alone can Christianity develop truly. This engagement procures for the teacher the efficacy of his word, and renders possible for the hearer to appropriate it with a truly personal acceptance. From the material aspect, philosophy has to prepare the ascent to God by showing that only in the transcendence man can find himself. At the same time philosophy, in confrontation with the mystery inscribed in human reason, prepares the field for the mystery and faith in theology. On the other hand, philosophy itself is enriched by theology because in the Incarnation shines the light of man totally ordained to God. Finally philosophy puts in light the fundamental datum of human conscience which renders possible the announcement of the Gospel to all nations.

Atheism and secularism are to be reckoned as the chief obstacles of evangelization in the contemporary world. Fr J. de Finance deals with the contemporary non-marxist atheism in relation to evangelization. A great obstacle to evangelization today is the fact that natural religiosity of man seems to be disappearing. For many the problem of God does not arise any

more: they do not feel concerned with Him. For logical neopositivism, the word 'God' is devoid of meaning. This state of the mind is due in part to the imperialism of a science gone out of its limits, and which finds an ally in the modern conscience, in its comfort in the verifiable, ill at ease in the Transcendent; but also to the triumphs of the technique that would make man lose the sense of respect and of mystery, and invite him to regard himself as the absolute master. God appears to become useless. One says that the atheist rejects a false idea of God. But this false idea can be the effect of a false spiritual attitude. If it is true that atheism is not always a culpable refusal, it is not necessary to see in every atheist an anonymous believer. The 'treatment' of atheism will consist first in making man feel that the problem of God has a sense and concerns him, in particular in what pertains to moral life (by avoiding simplicist and clumsy confusions). This supposes that man takes his existence seriously. He should have the sense of his dignity and confidence in the metaphysical reason. Reciprocally, it is in God that the dignity of man and the values which are dear to him find their guarantee. The author concludes the article by showing what the knowledge of Christ brings to our knowledge of God.

Fr G. Wetter deals with the problem of 'evangelization' in the marxist milieu and observes that this problem cannot be solved without a previous reply to the question: is Marxism necessarily atheist, and if so, in what measure? Taking into consideration the pluralism which today diversifies the different expressions of marxism, the question has to receive an answer also qualified in various manners. His study examines the three principal modalities: 1) The marxism of humanist orientation which has its starting point in the anthropology of the young Marx; 2) The marxism based on the dialectical and historical materialism; 3) The marxism, rooted exclusively in historical materialism. The author shows that the first and the second types have a character essentially atheist. The same cannot be said of the third. Starting from the historical materialism it is possible to recognize religion — as also in art and other supra-structural forms one can recognise an authentic human value. In conclusion, certain fundamental points are proposed

within which a dialogue between marxists and believers can be realized.

I have outlined the principal themes of this book. The problems concerning evangelization are immense; there is no pretension whatsoever in this book of having exhausted the subject-matter, nor of having given adequate answers even to some of the important problems raised at the Synod of Bishops on evangelization. We are happy to present this book as a modest contribution to the understanding of the nature and role of evangelization in the contemporary world, which constitutes the reason of being of the Church itself.

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Editor

Il vocabolario dell'annuncio nell'antico e nel nuovo testamento

(Contributo allo studio semantico di *higgid* e affini)

C. M. MARTINI, S. J.

« Annunciare » significa nel linguaggio corrente dare notizia di cosa che sia avvenuta o stia per avvenire. Il verbo viene usato per lo più quando la notizia da trasmettere ha una certa importanza per chi la riceve, ed è tale da suscitare reazioni di gioia o di timore, da colmare un'attesa, da incidere in qualche modo nella vita di colui a cui essa viene comunicata.

Nella Bibbia abbiamo molti esempi di tali annunci, riferiti alle realtà più varie dell'esistenza; annuncio dell'arrivo di una persona cara (Tob 11, 6; At 12, 14), di una vittoria (2 Sam 18, 19-32), di una sconfitta subita (1 Sam 4, 12-18); l'annuncio di una guarigione verificatasi (Giov 4, 51), della nascita di un bambino (Gen 22, 20); di una disgrazia improvvisa (Giob 1, 15-17) o prossima (At 13, 11); della morte imminente (Is 38, 1) ecc.

E' da aspettarsi che, essendo la Bibbia il libro che contiene la rivelazione divina, il tema dell'annuncio sia presente in molte forme soprattutto nella sfera religiosa. Poichè il tema è strettamente connesso con quello della *parola di Dio,* le forme dell'annuncio si diversificano e assumono anche una terminologia propria a seconda dei diversi contesti e del modo con cui viene annunciata la parola di Dio, della persona che annuncia, dell'oggetto specifico dell'annuncio ecc. Abbiamo così le attività della *predicazione,* della *proclamazione* — in particolare quella che ha per oggetto il *vangelo* — dell'*insegnamento,* e delle varie forme con cui può essere esercitata l'attività della *profezia,* come la *promessa,* la *comminazione* o minaccia, la *consolazione,* la *esortazione,* ecc.

Anche altri verbi come *parlare, dichiarare* e simili possono indicare nella Scrittura un'azione che in realtà ha la solennità e le caratteristiche proprie dell'annuncio. Per esempio in Es 19, 3 a proposito dell'annuncio del patto Dio dice a Mosè: « Così *dirai* alla casa di Giacobbe e *annuncerai* alla casa d'Israele ». Per limitare la nostra indagine a un campo preciso, ci proponiamo qui di trattare dell'attività dell'annuncio in quanto essa è presente nella Bibbia ebraica in relazione soprattutto al verbo הִגִּיד (higgîd), e nella Bibbia greca in relazione alla radice αγγελ- ossia principalmente nei verbi ἀναγγέλλω e ἀπαγγέλλω. Terremo però conto anche nei vocaboli ἀγγελία, ἀγγέλλω, διαγγέλλω, ἐξαγγέλλω, καταγγέλλω, καταγγελεύς, προκαταγγέλλω.

I vocaboli εὐαγγέλιον e εὐαγγελίζεσθαι richiederebbero una trattazione specifica sotto il tema del « vangelo »[1]. Su di essi daremo alcune indicazioni di carattere generale, per inserirli nel quadro dei vocaboli affini. Lasciamo da parte παραγγέλλω, ἐπαγγέλλω e derivati, che hanno assunto nell'uso un significato distinto da quello delle altre voci sopra indicate.

L'arco semantico di *higgîd* (insieme con lo hoph'al *huggad*) è molto vasto, e sarà necessario considerarlo (I) prima di tutto in se stesso, così come appare nella *Bibbia ebraica,* per rendersi conto della evoluzione che esso subisce nel V. T. a seconda dei diversi contesti cui viene applicato. Passeremo poi (II) a considerare i problemi della sua *traduzione in greco* nella Bibbia dei LXX, per vedere infine (III) come questi vocaboli appaiono nel *Nuovo Testamento.*

I) « Annunciare » (*higgîd*) nel V. T.

Le connotazioni del tema dell'annuncio sono espresse nella Bibbia ebraica soprattutto dal verbo הִגִּיד (*higgîd*), di uso molto frequente. Esso significa in generale mettere davanti, mettere in mostra, indicare, notificare, far sapere, riferire: di qui passa ai significati, in contesti più solenni, di insegnare, manifestare, svelare, annunciare, predire, celebrare, esaltare, ecc.

[1] Come contributo specifico allo studio del tema dell'evangelizzazione si veda C. M. Martini, *L'evangelizzazione negli Atti degli Apostoli,* in *Chiesa per il mondo*: I. *Saggi storico-biblici* (Miscellanea Pellegrino), Bologna 1974, pp. 121-130.

E' possibile indicare alcune tappe (naturalmente più logiche che cronologiche) lungo le quali il termine, pur restando sostanzialmente nella stessa linea di significato, subisce una certa evoluzione semantica per l'applicazione a contesti nuovi, di ordine religioso, determinati dai nuovi eventi della storia della salvezza.

a) Il significato primo del termine, che è ampiamente documentato nella Genesi e in genere nei libri storici (specialmente in 1 e 2 Sam) è quello di *indicare, riferire, informare,* trasmettere una notizia. Gli usi di questo tipo sono assai numerosi e si riferiscono un po' a tutte le vicende dell'esistenza: Cfr. Gen 14, 13; 24, 28; 26, 32; 41, 24; Jud 9, 42; 14, 9; 16, 15; 1 Sam 8, 9; 9, 6; 19, 7 ecc. ecc.

Da notare, tra questi usi profani, qualche contesto particolare di tipo *giuridico*: quello della testimonianza da rendersi obbligatoriamente di fronte allo scongiuro del giudice (« chi, ascoltando uno scongiuro ed essendo testimone o di veduta o di certa scienza, non *si dichiara* ... » Lev 5, 1), quello di « *denuncia* » di malattie infettive (Lev 14, 35, cfr. Prov 29, 24), e quello di *intimazione* di una serie di doveri legali derivanti da una data situazione (« e *dichiara* loro il diritto del re, che dovrà regnare su di essi » 1 Sam 8, 9). Cfr. ancora Deut 17, 4; 17, 9. 10. 11.

b) La funzione di riferire notizie o messaggi da parte di un altro viene ad assumere un rilievo del tutto nuovo quando essa viene esercitata in relazione ai messaggi di Jahwé per il suo popolo. E' questo il contesto di *higgîd* che potremmo chiamare *profetico,* e che è presentato concretamente per la prima volta nell'Esodo a proposito di Mosè, che riferisce ad Aronne le parole del Signore (Es 4, 28 cfr. Es 4, 30-31). Quest'attività di Mosè si esercita soprattutto a proposito del patto (Es 19, 3; Deut 5, 5): essa comporta anche l'ufficio di riferire al Signore le parole del popolo (Es 19, 9).

L'uso del verbo *higgîd* per designare l'azione del profeta che comunica qualcosa a nome di Dio si ritrova in altri passi della Bibbia, particolarmente negli scritti profetici: cfr. 1 Sam 3, 13. 15; 2 Sam 7, 11; 1 Re 14, 3; 2 Re 4, 27; Is 21, 10; Ger 4, 5; 5, 20; 9, 11; 16, 10; 33(40), 3; 42(49), 4; 50(27), 2.

Tale azione profetica, secondo le circostanze può assumere diversi toni. Uno di quelli che ricorrono con una certa frequenza,

e ha una parentela con i contesti giuridici citati sopra in a) è quello della denuncia di situazioni opposte alla rettitudine e al volere di Jahwè: « Annunciatelo alla casa di Giacobbe ... hanno orecchie e non sentono » (Ger 5, 20-21); « Grida a gran voce ... e annuncia al popolo le sue scelleratezze » (Is 58, 1). Cfr. Ez. 3, 19-21; 23, 36; Mic 3, 8. Tali situazioni, se previste per il futuro, possono portare all'annuncio di castighi che minacciano il popolo (Deut 30, 17-18).

Tuttavia anche il comportamento del popolo, quale Dio lo desidera, può essere oggetto di « annuncio » in quanto gli viene pubblicamente dichiarato a nome di Dio: « Ti fu annunziato, o uomo, quello che è ben fatto e quello che Dio ricerca da te: nient'altro che praticare la giustizia ... » (Mic 6, 8. Cfr. anche Es 19, 3 e Sal 147, 19). Di conseguenza ogni parola del Signore può essere concretamente oggetto di annuncio da parte del profeta: « Chi è quel saggio ... che annuncia ciò che di sua bocca gli dice il Signore? » (Ger 9, 11).

c) In alcuni casi, omettendo la menzione della mediazione profetica, *Dio stesso* è presentato come il *soggetto* dell'annuncio, specialmente riguardo ai messaggi di gran rilievo. Così Dio è descritto come colui che « *promulgò* il suo patto » (Deut 4, 13), o che a Davide « *annuncia* che Egli ti formerà un casato » (2 Sam 7, 11). Nel Deutero-Isaia l'annuncio solenne messo in bocca a Dio assume spesso la caratteristica di predizione di cose future, in opposizione degli idoli che non hanno questo potere: « Io sono il Signore; questo è il mio nome, e la mia gloria non darò ad altri, né il mio vanto ai simulacri. I primi fatti eccoli già venuti, e dei nuovi *io ne annuncio*; prima che spuntino io ve li fo sentire » (Is 42, 9-10). Si veda ancora Is 41, 22. 23. 26-28 (gli idoli non sanno annunciare le cose future); 43, 9; 44, 7. 8; 45, 19. 21; 48, 3. 5. 14.

Le opere nuove che Jahwè sta per compiere in favore del suo popolo devono essere attese con piena fiducia, perché Dio è, a differenza degli idoli vani, il padrone dell'avvenire come del passato: « Io che sin da principio annuncio il fine, e anzi tempo le cose ancora da compiersi; che dico: il mio disegno avrà effetto e compirò ogni mio dovere » (Is 46, 10; si veda anche per intero Is 48, 1. 19, dove appare come il potere divino di annunciare le cose future è legato intimamente con tutto l'agire divino nella storia della salvezza). Giustamente l'Ecclesiastico concludeva questo filone di riflessioni sulla prescienza di Jahwè affermando il carattere illimitato di questo suo potere: « L'Altissimo conosce tutto lo scibile e prevede il più lontano avvenire. Annuncia il passato e il futuro » (Eccl 42, 19).

d) A mano a mano che procede la storia di Israele, il popolo ascolta nuovi annunci divini e prende coscienza di una provvidenza straordinaria di misericordia e di grazia da parte di Jahwè. La contemplazione di questo disegno divino sfocia in esclamazioni che annunciano pubblicamente, in un'atmosfera di lode, le grandi imprese di Dio a favore del popolo [2]. Il contesto più propizio per questo tipo di annuncio è naturalmente quello del *culto* ed è infatti nei Salmi che troviamo più frequenti le espressioni di questi sentimenti. Il verbo *higgîd* allarga così la sua sfera di applicazione ad annunci fatti da uomini collocati idealmente nel tempio, di fronte alla moltitudine di Israele in ascolto, o anche rivolgentisi alle nazioni pagane. Proseguendo nella stessa linea l'annuncio è fatto esprimere anche retoricamente dalle grandi opere del creato, specialmente dai cieli. Un accenno a quest'uso in contesto cultuale si può veder già in Esodo 13, 8: l'uso del mangiare gli azzimi viene giustificato con una spiegazione che è insieme proclamazione delle opere di Jahwè: « In quel giorno *dichiarerai* a tuo figlio con dire: questo è a cagione di quanto il Signore fece per me, allorché uscii dall'Egitto ». Un analogo accenno si può vedere in Deut 26, 3: in occasione dell'offerta delle primizie l'Israelita dovrà dire: « Io *professo* oggi al Signore, mio Dio, che sono ormai giunto nella terra che il Signore giurò ai nostri padri di dare a noi ». E segue poco dopo (vv. 5-10) la confessione dei benefici divini, a partire da quelli fatti a Giacobbe (Cfr. anche Deut 32, 7 e Neh 2, 18, per l'annuncio-racconto dei benefici di Dio per il passato).

Ma è nei Salmi che l'annuncio dei benefici divini viene proposto in forma esplicita e solenne:

« E' bello dar lode al Signore
o inneggiare al tuo nome, o Altissimo

[2] In un contesto profano v'è un esempio di uso del verbo che aiuta a comprendere le applicazioni semantiche che seguiranno. Giuseppe comanda ai suoi fratelli che tornano dall'Egitto: « Annunciate dunque a mio padre tutta la mia gloria in Egitto e tutto ciò che avete veduto » (Gen 45, 13).

annunciare al mattino la tua bontà
e la tua fedeltà nelle ore di notte » (Sal 92, 2-3)

In questo brano il parallelismo con « dar lode » e « inneggiare » e la menzione delle diverse ore della preghiera mostra chiaramente l'uso cultico del verbo annunciare. Si vedano in un significato simile Sal 30, 10; 51, 17; 64, 10; 71, 15. 17. 18; 75, 10; 92, 16 e probabilmente 22, 32; 145, 4.

L'annuncio delle opere di Jahwè non deve restringersi al popolo d'Israele nel tempio, ma estendersi a tutti i popoli: « cantate lodi al Signore che abita in Sion, annunciate fra i popoli le opere sue » (Sal 9, 12). E poiché tutto l'universo è testimone delle opere di Dio, esso può annunciarne le imprese: « I cieli annunciano la sua giustizia, e tutti i popoli sono spettatori della sua gloria » (Sal 97, 6. Cfr. similmente Sal 19, 2; 50, 6 ecc.). A lode di Dio risulta anche l'annuncio pubblico della propria colpa, probabilmente sempre in contesto cultuale; cfr. Sal 38, 19: « Sì, *confesso* (denunzio?) la mia iniquità ... ». Espressioni in cui il verbo *higgîd* è usato in un contesto di lode divina occorrono anche qualche volta in Isaia: Si veda Is 42, 12; 66, 19. Cfr. anche Ger 25(50), 28.

Concludendo questa breve ricerca sui contesti in cui viene usato il verbo *higgîd*, non si può far a meno di notare la straordinaria vastità di applicazioni di un solo vocabolo, che vanno dalla semplice trasmissione di una notizia utile per la vita quotidiana fino alla proclamazione cosmica delle opere di Jahwè. Questo fatto da un lato mette in imbarazzo i traduttori moderni, che devono far ricorso a un grande numero di vocaboli per indicare le varie idee espresse da questo verbo a seconda dei contesti. Ma da un altro lato esso ci fa percepire l'unità della rivelazione biblica e la sua inserzione nelle esperienze quotidiane degli uomini, che le danno il materiale per le sue espressioni anche più alte.

e) Rimane ancora da far menzione di un'altra radice verbale, che è importante perché la traduzione greca dei LXX la renderà con un vocabolo della stessa radice di quelli normalmente usati per tradurre *higgîd*: si tratta di בָּשַׂר e del sostantivo בְּשׂוֹרָה

Il sostantivo *besôrāh* appare nel testo masoretico 6 volte

e significa « lieto annuncio » (2 Sam 18, 20. 25. 27; 4 Re 7, 9) o la ricompensa dovuta per esso (2 Sam 4, 10; 18, 22)[3].

Il verbo *bissar* si trova 22 volte nel testo masoretico, col significato di « annunciare notizie liete ». Si va da un contesto di vittoria sopra i nemici (2 Sam 18, 19) all'annuncio cultico delle vittorie operate da Jahwè (Sal 68, 12: « delle evangelizzanti è grande la schiera »; cf. Sal 40, 10; 96, 2), e alla proclamazione della futura salvezza che Dio opererà in favore di Sion (cf. Is 40, 9; 52, 7; 60, 6; 61, 1; Na 2, 1).

Nei LXX il sostantivo è tradotto una volta col plurale εὐαγγέλια (2 Sam 4, 10), e negli altri casi con il singolare εὐαγγελία.

Nella Bibbia greca dei LXX non appare mai il singolare εὐαγγέλιον.

Il verbo è tradotto per lo più con εὐαγγελίζεσθαι.

Nei contesti isaiani, i più importanti per il Nuovo Testamento, la versione della CEI traduce con: « recar liete notizie », « essere messaggero di lieti annunci », o semplicemente: « proclamare » (Is 61, 1).

II) « Annunciare » nella versione greca dei LXX

La situazione della versione greca dei LXX rispetto al tema dell'annuncio, espresso in ebraico con *higgîd*, si può riassumere brevemente così: a) I termini generalmente usati per tradurre l'ebraico sono ἀναγγέλλω e ἀπαγγέλλω. b) Tuttavia talora si hanno anche altri termini, c) mentre viceversa i due verbi greci sopra ricordati traducono in parecchi casi verbi ebraici diversi da *higgîd*. d) Infine è da considerare l'uso nei LXX di alcuni verbi composti con αγγελ-, che servono per completare il quadro del tema dell'annuncio nella Bibbia greca, e preparano anch'essi, come i due verbi principali, alla considerazione del tema dell'annuncio nel Nuovo Testamento.

a) *I vocaboli greci comunemente usati* dai LXX per tradurre *higgîd* sono ἀναγγέλλω (circa 180 volte) e ἀπαγγέλλω (circa 184 volte). (Si tenga presente che i due verbi possono essere

[3] In realtà non è chiaro se il termine in 2 Sam 18, 22 si riferisca piuttosto al premio che all'annuncio stesso (Vaccari traduce « novità da annunciare »).

scambiati facilmente dai copisti nella trascrizione, e che di conseguenza la tradizione testuale è spesso incerta tra i due).

Stando al loro significato originario, ἀναγγέλλω corrisponderebbe più propriamente al nostro « *ri*ferire », indicando l'azione di riportare con sé delle notizie da trasmettere tornando da un altro paese; ἀπαγγέλλω indicherebbe invece la trasmissione di notizie fatta *da parte* di qualcuno, o da qualche luogo. Tuttavia nella grecità profana i due verbi vennero praticamente ad equivalersi quanto al senso, e nella koiné ἀπαγγέλλω prevalse nell'uso corrente.

Qual era l'arco di significati di questi due verbi nel periodo in cui si fece la traduzione greca della Bibbia? Essi indicavano normalmente tutte le azioni di riferire, informare, dar notizia, anche proclamare, ecc. [4]. Inoltre avevano avuto alcune applicazioni a contesti speciali, che conferivano loro una maggior ricchezza di senso. Venivano infatti usati nella lingua religiosa ellenistica per l'indizione di sacrifici e specialmente dei giochi sacri, come pure per l'annuncio di eventi connessi col culto del sovrano. Anche il culto di Ermes e le aretalogie usufruivano di questo vocabolo [5].

Venendo ora a trattare del loro uso nei LXX, ci si può chiedere prima di tutto se, vista la presenza numerica quasi identica di *anaggello* e *apaggello* nella Bibbia greca, i traduttori greci abbiano avuto dei motivi per preferire ora l'uno, ora l'altro dei due verbi. Una risposta definitiva non è facile, ma si ha l'impressione che i traduttori, nei contesti profani dei libri storici, non abbiano fatto differenza tra i due verbi [6]; mentre nei contesti religiosi, prevalenti in Isaia e nei Salmi, preferiscono ἀναγγέλλω.

Benché l'uso dei due verbi nella grecità in contesti cultuali

[4] Si vedano esempi di questi usi nei lessici come ROCCI, LIDDELL-SCOTT-JONES, MOULTON-MILLIGAN, e anche in *Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento*, I, Brescia 1965, p. 163.

[5] Si vedano i luoghi citati da J. SCHNIEWIND, in *Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento*, I, Brescia 1965, pp. 149-152.

[6] Si veda come esempio tipico dello scambio dei verbi in contesto profano, e insieme della fluttuazione delle lezioni, Gen 24,23: « Di chi sei figlia? *Dimmelo* (*anaggellô*) ti prego »; 24,28 « E la fanciulla ... *raccontò* (*anaggellô*: codice L; *apaggellô*: cod. A); 24,47; « *dimmelo* (*anaggellô*: cod. A solo); 24,49: « se volete usare benignità ... *ditemelo* (*apaggellô*) ». Cfr. anche Sal 71,17.18 dove, in un contesto del tutto simile, si ha nel codice B *anaggellô*, poi *apaggellô*.

manifestasse in essi la capacità di piegarsi in genere a significati religiosi, tuttavia non sembra che la loro scelta da parte dei traduttori greci della Scrittura sia dovuta a un influsso dei contesti sacrali ellenistici. Essa è avvenuta semplicemente sulla linea dell'ebraico, che, allargando la sfera degli usi del verbo *higgîd* da contesti di semplice informazione a contesti di profezia e lode cultuale, ha causato l'analogo fenomeno per i verbi greci scelti dai traduttori per rendere il significato basilare di *higgîd*. Una conferma di ciò si ha nel fatto che non esiste una vera analogia tra i contesti religiosi del mondo greco sopra citati e quelli biblici. Potrebbe far eccezione Is 42,12 (cfr. anche Is 66,19), che potrebbe far pensare alle « aretologie » ellenistiche (narrazioni delle opere prodigiose di un dio). Ma il contesto storico-escatologico di Isaia, ed anche la terminologia generale sono assai diversi dalle narrazioni isolate di fatti prodigiosi di divinità ellenistiche [7].

b) *Altri verbi greci usati per tradurre "higgîd"*. Si tratta di pochi casi, che non mutano il quadro semantico finora tracciato, come è facile vedere in un esempio come questo [8], che si riconduce al contesto cultuale: « Io *annuncerò* nei secoli, inneggerò al Dio di Giacobbe » (Sal 75,10) tradotto dai LXX con ἀγαλλιάσομαι, e anche da qualche moderno (Nardoni) con « inneggerò ». Cfr. ancora Gen 41,25; Gios 2,20; Rut 3,16 ecc.

c) *Verbi ebraici al di fuori di "higgîd"* come sostrato di: ἀναγγέλλω e ἀπαγγέλλω.

Oltre a verbi di « dire » (*'âmar, dibber*) che occorrono talora in contesti profani, sono importanti, in relazione ai contesti religiosi ricordati a proposito di *higgîd*, alcuni verbi come *sipper* (numerare, enumerare, raccontare, narrare) e *hôdi'a* (dare notizia). Essi non mutano tuttavia il quadro semantico tracciato in precedenza, in quanto appaiono, alla base di *anaggéllô* e *apaggéllô*, in contesti cultuali del tutto analoghi a quelli di *higgîd*. Si veda ad esempio Sal 89,2: « Voglio cantar sempre le grazie del Signore, di mia bocca *annunciare* (*'ôdi'a, apaggellô*) la tua fedeltà per tutte le età ». Oppure Sal 102,22: « Affinché *annuncino* (*sipper*, ἀνήγγειλα) in Sion il nome del Signore e la

[7] Cfr. J. SCHNIEWIND, o. c., pp. 166-167.

[8] Posto naturalmente che i LXX abbiano letto nell'ebraico *higgîd*, come abbiamo nel TM, e non una qualche variante, il che non è da escludersi.

sua lode in Gerusalemme ». Si notino in particolare due occorrenze nei profeti, che ritorneranno nel Nuovo Testamento: Is 52, 15 (contesto profetico, di rivelazione) ripreso in Rom 15, 21 (in contesto missionario), e Is 42, 1, ripreso in Mt 12, 18 (ma è Matteo che pone qui *apaggéllô*). In I Cron 16, 33 ἀναγγείλατε traduce il verbo ebraico *bissar*: il testo parallelo di Sal 95, 2 (96, 2) traduce εὐαγγελίζεσθε.

d) *Altri vocaboli composti con* αγγελ- *nella Bibbia greca del V. T.*

Si tratta in particolare del sostantivo ἀγγελία (14 volte) e dei verbi διαγγέλλω (8 volte), εἰσαγγέλλω (12 volte), καταγγέλλω (3 volte) e di εὐαγγέλιον ed εὐαγγελίζεσθαι.

— ἀγγελία significa in genere annuncio ed è usato quasi sempre in contesti della vita ordinaria: può essere un annuncio triste, di sconfitta e di morte (1 Sam 4, 19; Ez 7, 26) e un annuncio lieto (Prov 12, 25). Da notare però Is 28, 9, in cui l'espressione « abbiamo annunciato l'annuncio » (*anêggeilamen aggelian*) si riferisce a un oracolo di falsi profeti, e viene ripreso nel N. T. in Jo 1, 5.

— διαγγέλλω significa di per sé *trasmettere* o *ritrasmettere* un messaggio. Nella Bibbia greca è applicato a trasmissioni cui è data grande pubblicità (cfr. 2 Macc 1, 33), anche attraverso strumenti come il suono delle trombe (Lev 25, 9). Particolare importanza per il contesto religioso hanno Sal 2, 7 (annuncio solenne della intronizzazione regale decretata da Dio stesso) e Sir 43, 2, che ricorda le lodi cosmiche dei Salmi. Sono da notare due casi di annunci « missionari », che avvengono per opera di pagani. In 2 Macc 3, 34, Eliodoro, castigato dal cielo, e salvato per le preghiere di Onia, è invitato ad annunciare a tutti le meraviglie di Dio e la sua potenza (2 Macc 3, 34); e, più importante perché ripreso nel N. T. (Rom 9, 17), in Es 9, 16 il Faraone con la sua resistenza a Mosè fa sì che si mostri in lui la potenza di Dio e che il suo nome « sia annunciato per tutta la terra ». Lo stesso verbo lo ritroveremo nel N. T. nel comando di Gesù al discepolo riluttante: « Tu va' e annuncia il regno di Dio » (Luc 9, 60).

— ἐξαγγέλλω: il significato originario del verbo « annunciare a partire da », « mandar fuori un messaggio », che appare in Prov 12, 16 (opposto a « nascondere »; cfr. anche Sal 119, 26 e Sal 55, 9 nel greco), si allarga in quello di « annuncio ampio, esaustivo, universale ». Il contesto più notevole è quello della lode cultuale e nei Salmi. « Il mio bene è lo starmene presso Dio ... per raccontare tutte le opere di lui » (Sal 73, 28). Si veda ancora Sal 9, 15; 71, 15; 79, 13; 107, 22; 119, 13; Eccli 18, 4. Una speciale applicazione alle lodi del giusto si ha in Sir 39, 10 e 44, 15. Da notare che 1 P 2, 9, l'unico passo che ha questo verbo nel N. T., ha alla base probabilmente Is 43, 21, dove però i LXX hanno διηγεῖσθαι. C'è forse anche un influsso di Is 42, 12, dove i LXX hanno *anaggelein.*

— καταγγέλλω: il verbo occorre molto di rado (3 volte). Due occorrenze riguardano la proclamazione pubblica delle opere di Dio in seguito a manifestazioni straordinarie della potenza di Jahwè (2 Macc 8, 36 e 9, 17).

— εὐαγγελίζεσθαι e εὐαγγέλιον: nella Bibbia greca dei LXX c'è una corrispondenza stretta tra εὐαγγέλιον - εὐαγγελία ed εὐαγγελίζεσθαι da una parte, e i termini ebraici *bissar* e *besôrāh* dall'altra. Non c'è quindi qui che da rinviare alle osservazioni fatte sopra a I e), tenendo però presente che in tre casi (I Cron 16, 23; I Sam 4, 17 e Is 41, 22) *bissar* è tradotto con altre parole greche. In particolare in I Cron 16, 23 riappare ἀναγγέλλω (vedi sopra II c).

In conclusione si può notare che l'uso delle radici connesse con αγγελ- ricalca in genere i contesti già notati per l'ebraico *higgîd.* I libri del canone greco, come i Maccabei, aggiungono qualche nuovo esempio, ma in generale nelle stesse linee di significato.

Sarà ora interessante vedere come, su questa vasta preparazione semantica, si innesta il Nuovo Testamento.

III) La radice ἀγγελ- nel Nuovo Testamento[9]

La prima impressione che si riceve abbordando lo studio della radice ἀγγελ- nel N. T. dopo l'analisi dei dati vecchiotesta-

[9] L'argomento è trattato analiticamente dal J. Schniewind nell'articolo del *Grande Lessico del N. T.*, I, pp. 149-194. Qui insistiamo su alcuni aspetti di carattere sintetico, e su alcune precisazioni riguardo alle posizioni di Schniewind. Pur nella sobrietà delle valutazioni, egli mostra la tendenza, tipica del tempo in cui fu scritto l'articolo, e più ancora del tempo in cui egli compose il suo lavoro su « *Euaggelion* », ad assimilare i contesti biblici a quelli ellenistici (J. Schniewind, *Euaggelion. Ursprung und erste Gestalt des Begriffs Evangelium*, Gütersloh 1927, 1931).

mentari è quella di sorpresa di fronte alle novità delle situazioni. Verbi di uso frequentissimo nel V. T. come *anaggellô* e *appagellô*, diminuiscono notevolmente nella frequenza e nell'importanza. Altri verbi di questa radice quasi assenti nel V. T., come *kataggellô*, crescono di frequenza, almeno in qualche scritto del N. T. Nel complesso però, il compito di significare le grandi idee dell'annuncio da parte di Dio, passa ad altri verbi che non avevano quasi storia nel V. T.

Tratteremo prima di tutto di *anaggellô* e *apaggellô*. I due verbi appaiono nel complesso nel N. T. 59 volte, 13 *anaggellô*, 46 *apaggellô* [10]. E' Luca, buon lettore del V. T., che ha la maggior frequenza nell'uso di questi termini, specialmente del secondo (*anagg.* 5 v. in Atti, *apagg.* 11 v. nel vangelo e 16 in Atti). Seguono poi gli scritti giovannei con 10 occorrenze (6 *anagg.*, con Jo 5, 15 e 3 *apagg.*). Mt ha 8 v. *apagg.* Anche qui naturalmente vi sono incertezze testuali e scambi, anche con *aggellô* (cfr. Mt 28, 11). Tuttavia è possibile tracciare un quadro sufficientemente chiaro degli usi neotestamentari di questi verbi esaminando successivamente a) i sinottici, b) gli Atti degli Apostoli, c) il corpus giovanneo, e d) gli altri scritti del N. T.

a) *I sinottici.*

Malgrado le fluttuazioni dei codici, è probabile che nei Sinottici non si trovi mai il verbo *anaggellô*. *Apaggellô* appare invece nei vari strati della tradizione e in usi diversi.

La tradizione triplice (Mt-Mc-Lc) usa il verbo nel senso di « riferire, trasmettere una notizia »: cfr. Mc 5, 14, Mt 8, 33 e Lc 8, 34. Tale uso si ha anche nella duplice tradizione Mt-Lc (Mt 11, 4 e Lc 7, 22), nelle parti proprie a Matteo (2, 8; 14, 12; 28, 11) e in quelle proprie a Luca, che inserisce volentieri questo verbo nelle sue narrazioni (Lc 7, 18; 8, 20; 9, 36; 13, 1; 14, 21; 18, 37). Marco ha usato il verbo anche nel significato di annunciare pubblicamente un beneficio ricevuto (Mc 5, 19; per Mc il verbo appare qui sinonimo di κηρύσσω cfr. Mc 5, 20) e di narrare le opere compiute con l'aiuto divino (Mc 6, 30).

Una importanza particolare assume il verbo nei racconti della risurrezione. Esso designa la trasmissione dei fatti avvenuti presso la tomba vuota e delle parole udite, in Mt 28, 8. 10, Mc 16, 10. 13 e Lc 24, 9. Un ultimo uso caratteristico da ricordare è quello di Mt 12, 18, in cui il verbo appare in una citazione da Isaia 42, 1; il Messia « annuncerà il diritto delle nazioni ». Si è visto sopra parlando del V. T. come questo verbo è caratteristico del Deutero-Isaia, tuttavia i LXX in Is 42, 1 hanno ἐξοίσει, aderendo più fedelmente all'ebraico che ha: « apporterà la giustizia ai popoli ».

In conclusione i sinottici usano il verbo in continuità con i contesti vecchiotestamentari del termine, ma senza insistere sui contesti religiosi che avevano fatto la fortuna del termine nel Vecchio Testamento.

b) *L'opera lucana.*

Si è già visto sopra come Luca usi volentieri di *apaggéllô* in contesti di trasmissione di notizie [11]. Si distaccano di poco da questi significati Lc 8, 47 (l'emorroissa annuncia davanti al popolo ciò che le è successo: cfr. Mc 5, 33 « gli disse tutta la verità »), e Lc 8, 34. 36 (i pastori annunciano in città il fatto dei porci, e i testimoni riferiscono ai pastori come l'indemoniato è stato guarito).

Allo stesso modo negli Atti molte occorrenze di *apaggellô* si riferiscono a contesti di semplice informazione o trasmissione di notizie (cfr. At 4, 23; 5, 22. 25; 12, 14. 17; 15, 27; 16, 36. 38; 22, 26; 23, 16. 17. 19; 28, 1). Non è facile vedere con Schniewind (*Grande Lessico*, I, 174) un uso specificamente religioso in 4, 23, 11, 13 e 12, 14. 17. Nel primo passo Cornelio riferisce un fatto, così come si ha anche in 5, 22 o 5, 25. In 12, 14 il verbo esprime bene la sfumatura della sorpresa e dell'annuncio gioioso, ma siamo lontani dalla solennità dei contesti analizzati nel V. T. Anche in 4, 23, benché prepari la preghiera destinata a riconoscere la presenza del piano divino negli eventi presenti (4, 24-28) come introduzione alla domanda del coraggio della parola (4, 29-31), il verbo ha per oggetto non i benefici divini, ma le parole del Sinedrio. Anche in 12, 17 è sintomatico che là dove l'oggetto del racconto è un'impresa prodigiosa del Signore, Luca usa *diêgêsato*, mentre *apaggellein* denota l'azione di riferire tali

[10] Il testo bizantino registrava una maggior frequenza di *anaggellô*. Oggi i critici si inclinano, nei casi dubbi, alla lettura di *apaggellô* (cfr. Mt 28, 11). In Lc occorre leggere, in tutte le occorrenze, *apaggellô*.

[11] J. SCHNIEWIND, o. c., p. 174, parla di fenomeno dovuto a stile letterario, ma riconosce che esso non si ha in Filone. E' probabilmente l'influsso dei LXX che spiega questa particolarità lucana.

cose a Giacomo. Un analogo uso di *diêgêsthai* là dove ci si sarebbe aspettati *apaggellein* (che è il verbo usato da Marco) l'abbiamo visto in 8, 39 rispetto a Mc 5, 19.

Un contesto religioso tipico sarebbe quello di At 17, 30, in cui si ha una intimazione (o annuncio?) di penitenza universale. Ma, contro i codici S e B, è da leggersi qui παραγγέλλω con la maggioranza degli altri codici e con i papiri 41 e 74. *Apaggellô* in questo caso contrasterebbe con l'uso lucano finora osservato, tanto più che avremmo qui l'unico caso in cui esso sarebbe attribuito a Dio stesso.

Rimane allora, come uso probabilmente lucano in contesto religioso (malgrado non manchino anche qui incertezze testuali) At 26, 20. Non si tratta di proclamazione delle opere divine, ma dell'azione di intermediario che Paolo compie rispetto alla voce divina (At 26, 14-19) annunciando che occorre pentirsi e convertirsi a Dio. Un uso dunque che rimane nella sfera della « trasmissione », tipica di Luca.

Anaggellô, che appare cinque volte negli Atti, presenta un significato particolare? Ce lo aspetteremmo, dal momento che Luca lo evita nel Vangelo, dove si hanno solo contesti di semplice informazione. Di fatto si ha l'impressione che Luca, nella sua meditazione accurata dei LXX, abbia colto la presenza di *anaggellô* soprattutto nei contesti religiosi, e intenda attenersi a questa norma.

Due delle occorrenze sono in un contesto simile, ossia nel racconto che Paolo e Barnaba fanno delle cose che Dio ha operao per mezzo loro tra i pagani. Tale racconto è fatto prima alla comunità di Antiochia (14, 27), poi a quella di Gerusalemme (15, 4). La formula è praticamente identica nei due casi, e ricorda da vicino il contesto dell'annuncio cultuale delle meravigliose opere di Dio, che si è visto nei Salmi.

Altre due occorrenze sono pure molto affini tra loro e si ricollegano al contesto profetico vecchiotestamentario, indicando l'annuncio fatto a nome di Dio: At 20, 20 e 20, 27.

Un contesto speciale si ha in At 19, 18, in cui il verbo indica la manifestazione delle proprie opere malvage come segno di pentimento. Anche qui si può tuttavia indicare un uso analogo del verbo che abbiamo già sopra registrato a proposito dell'annuncio cultuale nel V. T., nel Sal 38, 19: « Sì, denunzio la mia iniquità ».

Da questa analisi degli usi lucani si deve dunque concludere che Luca, ispirandosi da vicino al V. T., anzi riducendo a sistema ciò che ivi era ancora in stato un po' fluido, distingue accuratamente tra *apaggellô* e *anaggellô*: assegna al primo verbo le funzioni di riferire, trasmettere, e al secondo quelle dell'annuncio in una sfera propriamente sacrale e nella linea dei contesti già determinati dal V. T.

c) *Gli scritti giovannei.*

Oltre a cinque occorrenze di *anaggellô* e una di *apaggellô* nei Vangeli, va notata la presenza negli scritti giovannei anche di ἀγγελία (1 Giov 1, 5, con *anaggellô* e 3, 11) e ἀγγέλλω (Giov 4, 51? e 20, 18).

L'uso di *aggellô* in 20, 18 è parallelo a quello già notato di *apaggellô* nei Sinottici per gli annunci della risurrezione. Giovanni sembra volergli dare un risalto particolare, tanto è vero che non è seguito dalla menzione della incredulità dei discepoli. Anche per questo motivo sembra preferibile dal punto di vista testuale non leggere qui *apaggellô*, come fanno invece molti codici. La lezione di 4, 51 è molto incerta, e forse è da omettere del tutto ogni forma del verbo. Ma si veda quanto diremo sotto a proposito di 5, 15.

Veniamo alle numerose occorrenze di *anaggellô*. Esse hanno certamente un risalto particolare fin da 4, 25: il Messia « annuncerà, farà conoscere » ogni cosa. Siamo richiamati a quei contesti profetici vecchiotestamentari in cui l'annuncio è messo in bocca a Dio stesso e corrisponde a uno svelamento di realtà ignote che costituiscono l'iniziativa divina di salvezza. Il significato si avvicina anche a quello di alcuni contesti apocalittici, per altro poco frequenti nel V. T., in cui il verbo è applicato allo svelamento di fatti segreti e nascosti (si veda specialmente Dan 2, 5. 6. 9. 16. 24. 25 ecc., e anche Giuditta 5, 5).

E' in questa linea di significati che va inteso il verbo anche in Giov 16, 13. 14. 15. Qui i diversi strati di significato del verbo, ossia « riferire da parte di un altro », « annunciare profeticamente », « svelare il futuro del piano divino », si fondono in una pienezza di significato che riassume molte delle virtualità acquisite dal termine nel suo lungo *iter* vecchiotestamentario.

Il caso di Giov 5, 15 è incerto: buoni manoscritti (come SC) e antiche versioni danno εἶπεν; ἀνήγγειλεν è la lezione di B A e

molti altri, mentre D e altri hanno ἀπήγγειλεν. Il contesto è analogo a quello di 4, 51. Considerando il caso alla luce della composizione giovannea, che ama enunciare già nei singoli episodi le loro conseguenze per la vita della Chiesa, si sarebbe forse propensi ad ammettere come originario l'uso di ἀνήγγειλεν, inteso nel senso di proclamazione dell'opera di Dio.

Il senso del verbo, col sostantivo ἀγγελία, nella prima lettera (1 Giov 1, 5), ha la pregnanza già notata in Giov 16. Il messaggio ricevuto viene trasmesso (1 Giov 1, 2 ἀπαγγέλλομεν) e annunciato con un annuncio solenne che è la proclamazione di un messaggio e insieme lo svelamento di un mistero. Il senso di *aggelia* come messaggio appare anche in 1 Giov 3, 11. Alla luce di quanto si è detto appare chiaro il motivo della scelta di *apaggellô* in Giov 16, 25 e 1 Giov 1, 2. In ambedue i casi si vuol connotare, più che l'aspetto di proclamazione, quello di trasmissione che Gesù esercita rispetto alle cose del Padre, e Giovanni rispetto al messaggio ascoltato.

Sembra così che anche Giovanni, come Luca, usi di questi vocaboli con grande accuratezza di distinzioni, nella linea dei significati dell'A. T., approfonditi e trasformati dalla trascendenza del mistero del Cristo che ora è posto al centro dell'annuncio.

d) *Altre occorrenze nel N. T.* Si tratta di casi isolati, in contesti diversi. Rom 15, 21 è una citazione di Is 52, 15, in cui *anagellô* traduce *sipper;* ma Paolo trasporta in un contesto di annuncio missionario ciò che in Isaia è piuttosto in un contesto di rivelazione. In 2 Cor 7, 7 *anagellô* è usato nel senso di « riferire », anche se si tratta di un annuncio destinato a procurare una gioia particolare. Un uso invece assai notevole di *apaggellô* si ha in 1 Cor 14, 25, in cui esso introduce una esclamazione che è il riconoscimento dell'agire di Dio in mezzo alla comunità. Un simile significato di proclamazione ha il verbo nella citazione che Eb 2, 12 fa del Sal 22, 22, e che può anche essere paragonata con la citazione sopra ricordata di Rom 15, 21. Si noti che i LXX in Sal 22, 22 hanno *diêgêsomai.* Un uso di *anaggellô* specificamente riferito alla predicazione cristiana, con una sfumatura anche di « rivelazione », si ha in 1 Piet 1, 12.

e) *Altri verbi composti con* αγγελ- *nel N. T.*

A parte una occorrenza di ἐξαγγέλλω in una citazione che 1 Pet 2, 9 fa di Is 43, 21 (cfr. anche Is 42, 12), in cui il verbo

non appare nei LXX, ma è introdotto dall'autore in un significato consono a quello che esso ha nel V. T. (cfr. quanto si è detto sopra a proposito di questo verbo), i due verbi da considerare sono διαγγέλλω e καταγγέλλω. εὐαγγελίζομαι e εὐαγγέλιον richiederebbero un discorso a parte. Daremo tuttavia anche su di essi alcune indicazioni sommarie. διαγγέλλω è usato da Lc 9, 60 in un contesto di annuncio evangelico, mentre in At 21, 26 indica una dichiarazione cultuale del compimento dei giorni prescritti per l'adempimento del voto, e in Rom 9, 17 è parte di una citazione di Es 9, 16, con un significato di manifestazione universale della potenza divina.

καταγγέλλω è molto usato negli Atti (7 occorrenze, più καταγγελεύς in At 17, 18), con riferimento sia alla predicazione dei profeti (3, 24) (cfr. le due occorrenze di προκαταγγέλλω in At 3, 18 e 7, 52), sia a quella dei missionari cristiani (13, 5. 38; 16, 17; 17, 3. 23), ed è attribuito anche al Messia stesso (26, 23). Un uso analogo del verbo è testimoniato anche da Paolo (1 Cor 2, 1; 9, 14; Fil 1, 17; Col 1, 28), che usa il verbo pure nel senso di proclamazione cultuale (1 Cor 11, 26) e proclamazione universale (Rom 1, 8).

Non è chiaro per quale motivo un verbo che non aveva quasi storia nel V. T. abbia preso una tale importanza e quasi un significato tecnico in questi scritti del N. T. Ciò che sembra si voglia sottolineare con il suo uso è una certa solennità e risonanza della proclamazione del messaggio, che si ha anche in κηρύσσω.

Il sostantivo εὐαγγέλιον ricorre 12 volte nei vangeli: 4 volte in Matteo (4, 23 e 9, 35: sommari che descrivono l'oggetto della predicazione di Gesù; 24, 14 e 26, 13: detti di Gesù riferiti al futuro); 8 volte in Marco (1, 1: « inizio del vangelo »; 1, 14: cf. Mt 4, 23; negli altri sei casi la parola è in bocca a Gesù: 1, 35; 8, 35; 13, 10 cf. Mt 24, 14; 14, 9 cf. Mt 26, 13; 16, 15).

In Luca e Giovanni non ricorre mai il sostantivo. Nel resto del Nuovo Testamento si trova soprattutto in S. Paolo (60 volte). Negli Atti ricorre due volte (15, 7; 20, 24).

Il verbo εὐαγγελίζεσθαι ricorre nei vangeli 11 volte, di cui una in Mt (11, 5 cf. Lc. 7, 22) e 10 in Luca (tre volte in detti di Gesù: 4, 18. 43; 7, 22; due volte in annunci angelici: 1, 19; 2, 10; quattro volte in descrizioni della attività di Gesù o di Giovanni Battista o dei discepoli (3, 18; 8, 1; 9, 6; 20, 1).

Nel resto del Nuovo Testamento il verbo è abbastanza frequente in Atti (15 volte) e in Paolo (22 volte). Tre volte appare nella 1 Pietro e una volta nella Apocalisse.

Sinteticamente si può dire che, mentre è del tutto assente nel Nuovo Testamento il significato di « premio per il lieto annuncio », il significato di « buona notizia » (e quello del verbo corrispondente) viene riservato unicamente per la sfera religiosa, in una duplice sfera di accezioni collegate tra loro e dipendenti una dall'altra [12].

a) *Il « vangelo » che Cristo ha predicato*: Gesù si presenta in Luca 4, 18-19 come colui che realizza la missione di consolazione e di liberazione preannunciata in Is. 61, 1ss, e ivi definita come un « annunciare la buona novella ai poveri ». Inoltre nella risposta alla domanda del Battista (Mt 11, 4-6; Lc 7, 22) Gesù definisce la sua opera con vari passi tratti da Isaia, tra cui appare anche la « evangelizzazione ai poveri » (cfr. Is 61, 1). La predicazione di Gesù è dunque la pienezza dell'annuncio di salvezza, la proclamazione dell'intervento potente di Dio a favore del popolo afflitto che Isaia aveva preannunciato (cfr. i passi citati in I b) c)) e si può quindi chiamare un « vangelo » nel senso pieno del termine, cioè il lieto annuncio dell'intervento definitivo di Dio. Qualificativo della predicazione di Gesù, di cui esprime il carattere messianico (Mc 1, 1), la parola « vangelo » ne può indicare e riassumere anche il contenuto (Mc 1, 15), che si identifica con la persona stessa del Cristo (Mc 8, 35; 13, 10). In questo estendersi del significato fino a comprendervi la persona stessa del messaggero come centro del messaggio abbiamo una caratteristica dell'annuncio cristiano rispetto agli altri « vangeli ».

b) *Il « vangelo » su Gesù*, ossia la predicazione apostolica sul Cristo. Gesù nel suo messaggio orale non aveva narrato la sua biografia: ma la « buona novella » come la intesero subito gli apostoli comprendeva anche gli atti e gli esempi della vita di Gesù, in particolare i fatti salvifici della sua morte, risurrezione e ascensione (cfr Atti 1, 1): in questo senso il termine è usato in Atti 5, 42 (« evangelizzare il Cristo Gesù »); 8, 35; 17, 18; 11, 20; 13, 32-33 (cfr Atti 18, 25 e 28, 31: « insegnare le cose che riguardano Gesù »), e in molti passi di S. Paolo (per es. 1 Cor. 9, 12; 2 Cor. 2, 12). Il significato viene così ampliandosi, e può anche specificarsi in sfumature particolari. Più volte in san Paolo il termine è usato ad indicare il modo tipico di predicazione dell'apostolo, con l'accento posto sulla salvezza annunciata a tutti i gentili (Rom 2, 16; 16, 25 ecc.).

[12] Indichiamo solo le linee generali del significato del termine. Lo studio delle specificazioni che essi assumono nei diversi scritti neotestamentari richiede distinzioni più complesse, che possono essere chiarite soltanto sullo sfondo della teologia dei diversi autori. L'esistenza di tali specificazioni appare già dal fatto statistico sopra riportato che, mentre il verbo è assai frequente negli scritti lucani, non vi ricorre quasi mai il sostantivo. In Mc invece solo il sostantivo è presente.

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In conclusione, notiamo nel N. T. la presenza di termini e contesti già elaborati nel V. T. Ma se paragoniamo le indicazioni raccolte con la ricchezza della nuova terminologia per indicare la trasmissione del messaggio cristiano (come ad esempio κηρύσσω ed εὐαγγελίζομαι) vediamo come l'eredità semantica vecchiotestamentaria non abbia contribuito che in parte alla formazione del nuovo linguaggio su questo punto. Il tema dell'annuncio che abbiamo esaminato in queste pagine mostra quindi da una parte la continuità linguistica tra Vecchio e Nuovo Testamento, ma rivela anche la trascendenza del secondo, che con l'irrompere di nuovi contenuti provvede alla formazione di un vocabolario nuovo.

Evangelizzazione. Senso di un termine

D. Grasso, S. J.

Sarebbe interessante sapere con esattezza quando il termine « evangelizzazione » abbia fatto la sua apparizione nel vocabolario cristiano. Esso infatti, nella forma sostantivata, non si trova nel Nuovo Testamento, benchè vi si trovi il verbo « euaggelizo » da cui deriva.

Nel 1900 Robert Speer, nella Conferenza ecumenica della chiesa presbiteriana degli Stati Uniti tenutasi alla Carnegie Hall di New York, senza porsi il problema dell'origine della parola, affermava che essa era stata usata da Alexander Duff « years and years ago » nella stessa città, e in una conferenza che poteva essere considerata come precorritrice di quella che aveva luogo allora. Ecco le parole del Duff riferite dallo Speer. « Il mezzo principale della chiamata divina per l'evangelizzazione del mondo sono il fedele insegnamento e la predicazione del puro Vangelo della salvezza, fatti da ministri debitamente qualificati e da altri santi e solidi discepoli di Gesù Cristo, accompagnati da preghiere e applicati a scopo di salvezza dalla grazia dello Spirito Santo » [1]. Nella conferenza del ministro presbiteriano si parla ancora delle sei grandi questioni riguardanti « l'evangelizzazione del mondo » [2]. Chiedendosi poi che cosa l'evangelizzazione significhi, l'autore risponde che essa consiste nel dare « a ogni persona un'adeguata opportunità di conoscere Gesù Cristo in quanto personale Salvatore e Signore » [3]. Subito dopo Lo Speer aggiunge

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[1] *The supreme and determining aim*, nel volume *Ecumenical and Missionary Conference*, New York 1900. *Report of the ecumenical conference on foreign Missions, held in Carnegie Hall and Neighboring Churches*, April 21 to May 1, New York London 1900, Vol. I, p. 76. Il volume cui qui si allude ha per titolo: *Proceedings of the Union Missionary convention held in New York May 4 and 5*, New York 1854.

[2] op. cit., p. 92.

[3] op. cit., p. 95.

che questa realtà non deve limitarsi alla pura proclamazione del Vangelo, ma prolungarsi nel battesimo dei convertiti, nella loro organizzazione nella Chiesa, nella loro formazione alla fede e nella loro preparazione al culto [4].

Più tardi, almeno per qualche tempo, sembra che i protestanti abbiano preferito usare il termine « evangelism » come risulta dalle risposte date da una serie di missionari e di persone impegnate nell'opera della diffusione della fede, a una domanda posta loro da John Mott, riguardante appunto la definizione della parola « evangelism » [5]. Tutte le risposte hanno presente la predicazione missionaria. Tuttavia anche in questo libro, benchè il termine « evangelism » ricorra, si può dire a ogni pagina non manca il termine « evangelizzazione ». Così leggiamo di uno « specifico fine dell'evangelizzazione » [6], di « evangelizzazione sistematica » [7], di « compito dell'evangelizzazione » [8], di « letteratura dell'evangelizzazione » [9].

Attualmente i due termini nel linguaggio protestante vengono usati indifferentemente. Il *Concise Dictionary of the Christian world mission*, alla parola « evangelism » scrive: « Euaggelion significa in greco la parola parlata piuttosto che quella scritta: è la proclamazione della Buona Novella. *Evangelism or evangelization* è, perciò, il termine esatto per la proclamazione del Vangelo a coloro i quali non hanno familiarità con esso » [10]. E infatti, il Dizionario non ha la parola « evangelization ». Segno evidente che è ritenuta sinonimo di « evangelism ».

In campo cattolico l'apparizione della parola è di data più recente, se nel 1956 il P. Liégé, poteva scrivere che esso è « significativo della pastorale contemporanea » e « relativamente recente » [11]. Ma già da allora l'uso del termine andava diffondendosi, e noi, in un articolo del 1961 davamo una rassegna delle varie accezioni in cui veniva impiegato, concludendo che ci sembrava opportuno riservarlo alla predicazione missionaria, cioè al primo annuncio del Cristo ai non cristiani, detto anche « Kerygma » [12].

Il Concilio, e specialmente il post-concilio, ci ha portato quasi a un'« inflazione » di questa parola, come è possibile argomentare dalle varie bibliografie apparse di recente [13]. Non è qui nostra intenzione passare in rassegna i vari scritti in cui compare il termine « evangelizzazione », anche se la fatica potrebbe essere utile. Ci limiteremo, invece, all'esame di alcuni documenti pubblicati in questi ultimi anni, allo scopo di chiarire il senso di un vocabolo che non manca di avere i suoi riflessi in campo pastorale.

Tratteremo dell'uso che della parola « evangelizzazione » fa il Concilio, per poi passare all'esame di alcuni documenti posteriori, culminati nel Sinodo dei vescovi del 1974, che ha fatto dell'evangelizzazione il tema stesso delle sue discussioni. Potremo così costatare come col passare degli anni non si sia raggiunta ancora un'unanimità di pareri.

1. L'evangelizzazione nel Concilio

La parola « evangelizzazione » è usata dal Concilio in sei documenti, per un totale di 31 volte. Il numero maggiore lo troviamo, com'è naturale, nel decreto *Ad Gentes* (21 volte), nell'*Apostolicam Actuositatem* (4 volte), nella *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (3 volte) e una sola volta nella *Lumen Gentium*, nel decreto *Christus Dominus* e nella costituzione pastorale *Gaudium et Spes*.

Cominciamo l'esame dagli ultimi documenti per poi risalire ai primi più importanti.

Nella *Lumen Gentium* si parla di « evangelizzazione » a proposito della missione profetica dei laici. Parlando di questa, il

[4] op. cit., p. 95.
[5] John Mott, *Studies in Evangelism*, pubblicati da William Paton, London 1938, pp. 46-57.
[6] op. cit., p. 148.
[7] op. cit., p. 148.
[8] op. cit., p. 156.
[9] op. cit., p. 247.
[10] *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World's Mission*, edited by Stephen Neill, Gerald H. Anderson, John Goodwin, London 1971, p. 199. E, infatti, il dizionario manca della parola *evangelization*. I due termini li troviamo anche nella *Lausanne Covenant* del 1974.
[11] *Catholicisme*, Vol. IV col. 755.
[12] *Evangelizzazione, Catechesi, Omilia. Per una terminologia della predicazione* in: *Gregorianum* 42 (1961) pp. 242-267.
[13] Cfr. la bibliografia di A. Marranzini al termine del suo volume *Evangelizzazione e sacramenti*, Città Nuova Editrice 1973. Si veda anche la bibliografia che segue i vari capitoli dedicati all'evangelizzazione dagli autori del volume *L'evangelizzazione del mondo contemporaneo*, a cura di R. Zavalloni, Roma 1974.

Concilio afferma che i laici diventano « efficaci araldi della fede » se « senza incertezze congiungono a una vita di fede la professione della fede ». Questo è chiamato dal Concilio « evangelizzazione ». Dice testualmente: « Questa evangelizzazione o annuncio di Cristo fatto con la testimonianza della vita e con la parola, acquista una certa nota specifica e una particolare efficacia, dal fatto che viene compiuta nelle comuni condizioni del secolo » (35, 18). Qui l'evangelizzazione è certamente l'annuncio della parola, non necessariamente però di carattere missionario. Il laico evangelizza con la parola e la testimonianza della vita, quale che sia la forma in cui ciò avviene. Può infatti manifestare la fede a un non cristiano, come confermare nella stessa chi già crede. E, in realtà, più oltre il testo conciliare specifica che questa opera di evangelizzazione viene compiuta dai laici specialmente nella famiglia. Il che fa pensare alla catechesi. Poco dopo la parola ricorre di nuovo, però in forma gerundiva, quando, tirando le conclusioni da quanto detto precedentemente, il Concilio afferma che i laici « possono e debbono esercitare una preziosa azione per l'evangelizzazione del mondo » (35, 31). Anzi si prevede il caso in cui, in mancanza dei sacri ministri, ne prendano il posto, in quanto lo consente la loro facoltà.

Possiamo perciò concludere che nella *Lumen Gentium* « evangelizzazione » indica tutto il ministero della parola, la predicazione del Vangelo, fatta con la parola e la testimonianza della vita a quanti o non conoscono ancora il Cristo o hanno necessità di essere istruiti nella fede.

Questo senso è confermato da quanto viene detto nel decreto *Christus Dominus* (6, 10). Nel n. 6 il documento tratta della sollecitudine dei vescovi per tutta la Chiesa. Questa sollecitudine, dicono i Padri conciliari, fa parte della collegialità episcopale, la quale impone ai vescovi il dovere di provvedere al bene di tutti i cristiani e degli stessi non cristiani, e deve mostrarsi in particolare per quelle parti del mondo nelle quali « la parola di Dio non è stata ancora annunciata », o nelle quali i fedeli a causa dello scarso numero dei sacerdoti sono in pericolo di abbandonare la pratica religiosa e la fede stessa. Perciò i vescovi debbono adoperarsi « perchè dai fedeli siano sostenute e promosse le opere di evangelizzazione e di apostolato » (6, 10). Anche qui l'evangelizzazione è l'annuncio della parola. I fedeli debbono fare del loro meglio perchè non manchino sacerdoti da

inviare ad annunciare la parola di Dio sia nei paesi di missione (predicazione missionaria), sia là dove il clero non è sufficiente per la conservazione della fede (predicazione catechetica e omiletica). Stiamo ancora nel campo dell'annuncio evangelico, che la parola « apostolato » inserisce nel contesto più ampio della missione della Chiesa.

Un pò meno preciso è invece il senso di evangelizzazione nella *Presbyterorum Ordinis*. Nel n. 5 si parla « dei sacramenti, di tutti i ministeri ecclesiastici e opere di apostolato, come strettamente uniti alla Sacra Eucarestia e ad essa ordinati », tanto che poco dopo questa è detta « fonte e culmine di tutta la evangelizzazione » (5, 22). Qui, com'è chiaro, evangelizzazione ha un senso più ampio della semplice proclamazione del Vangelo. Essa abbraccia i sacramenti, i ministeri ecclesiastici e le opere di apostolato, cioè in definitiva, tutta l'attività della Chiesa.

Questa interpretazione più ampia ci sembra confermata da quanto viene detto nel n. 6 dello stesso decreto sui presbiteri in quanto educatori del popolo di Dio. Il Concilio raccomanda loro in modo particolare i poveri e i deboli, e ne dà come motivazione il fatto che il Signore stesso volle mostrarsi loro particolarmente unito e la « cui evangelizzazione è mostrata come segno dell'opera messianica » (6, 26). Indubbiamente l'evangelizzazione dei poveri fatta da Gesù fu qualche cosa di più del semplice annuncio della parola di Dio. Per loro, infatti, il Signore compì la maggior parte dei suoi miracoli, da loro scelse i suoi apostoli, a loro adattò tutto il suo comportamento. Del resto il Concilio stesso inserisce questo testo non nel n. 4 del decreto dove tratta esplicitamente del ministero della parola, ma nel n. 6 in cui parla dell'educazione alla fede del popolo di Dio, di un soggetto cioè che non può essere ridotto al solo annuncio, ma abbraccia tutta l'attività del presbitero comunque essa si esplichi. Con tutto ciò che egli fa, il presbitero contribuisce a educare il popolo di Dio, nè più nè meno di Cristo che evangelizzò i poveri con tutto il suo comportamento e non solo con la parola. E' innegabile però che tra i mezzi da usarsi per l'educazione alla fede, per Gesù, come per i presbiteri, il primo posto spetta alla predicazione.

Ugualmente in un senso più ampio ci sembra usata la parola « evangelizzazione » nel n. 19, 16 dello stesso documento, dove si parla di « metodi di evangelizzazione e di apostolato ». Se

« apostolato » dà al termine « evangelizzazione » un senso più ristretto, in quanto che fa pensare, che essa non è tutto l'apostolato, non ci sentiremmo di dire che lo limiti a indicare unicamente il ministero della parola. Crediamo che il vocabolo non rivesta un significato a sè stante, ma vuole indicare che i presbiteri non debbono trascurare nessuno di quei metodi che possano aiutarli nell'espletamento della loro missione.

Il senso di evangelizzazione come annuncio della parola ritorna nell'unico testo in cui il termine è usato nella *Gaudium et Spes* (44, 13). Infatti leggiamo: « Questa appropriata predicazione della parola rivelata deve rimanere la legge di ogni evangelizzazione (44, 13). La costituzione pastorale cioè vuole affermare che la parola di Dio, nel suo annuncio, non può prescindere dalla cultura dei vari popoli ai quali è presentata, per poter rispondere ai loro problemi ed esigenze per essere così accettata nella fede. Che non si tratti della sola predicazione missionaria appare dal fatto che la legge dell'adattamento vale per tutte le forme della proclamazione del messaggio, anche se trova in quella missionaria, un'applicazione maggiore.

L'evangelizzazione nell'Apostolicam Actuositatem

Nel decreto sull'apostolato dei laici, la parola « evangelizzazione » ricorre quattro volte, e sempre unita all'altra di « santificazione ». La circostanza non è trascurabile.

Nel n. 2, 20 si dice: « In realtà essi (i laici) esercitano l'apostolato con la loro attività nell'evangelizzazione e santificazione degli uomini e con l'animare e perfezionare con lo spirito evangelico l'ordine temporale ». La stessa espressione ricorre ancora in 6, 10; 19, 3; 26, 2. Anche in questi passi evangelizzazione e santificazione sono unite nella stessa espressione. In tutti e tre, le opere di « evangelizzazione e santificazione » sono distinte da quelle che il laico può esercitare in quanto partecipe della potestà regale di Cristo. Così nel n. 6, 10 si parla unicamente di queste opere che si collegano con le prime due potestà di Cristo, mentre a quelle connesse con la terza, si riferisce il n. 7 sull'animazione cristiana dell'ordine temporale. Nel n. 19, 3 la distinzione è ancora più chiara. Il decreto parla delle associazioni di apostolato, delle quali alcune si propongono « il fine apostolico generale della Chiesa, altre in particolare il fine dell'evangelizzazione e della santificazione, altre attendono ai fini dell'animazione cristiana dell'ordine temporale, e altre rendono testimonianza a Cristo con le opere di misericordia e di carità ». Qui le opere di evangelizzazione e di santificazione non possono essere se non quelle riguardanti l'annuncio della parola o il culto, distinte tanto da quelle riguardanti il fine apostolico generale della Chiesa, quanto da quelle della animazione cristiana del temporale o della semplice pratica delle opere buone. E' chiaro che il Concilio pone sulla stessa linea, pur distinguendole, le opere che il laico esercita in forza della sua partecipazione alla potestà profetica e sacerdotale, in quanto più strettamente religiose di quelle esercitate in forza della potestà regale. Lo stesso si deve dire per il n. 26, 2.

Ci pare perciò che il criterio che il decreto usa per distinguere le varie azioni mediante le quali il laico partecipa all'edificazione della Chiesa, sia desunto non solo dalle tre potestà di Cristo, ma dalla connessione più o meno stretta con le attività più propriamente religiose. Bisogna ricordare che l'*Apostolicam Actuositatem* risente molto del clima dell'Azione cattolica fiorita ai tempi di Pio XI e di Pio XII, quando era definita come « la partecipazione dei laici all'attività gerarchica della Chiesa ». Tra queste attività quelle dell'evangelizzazione e della santificazione erano particolarmente sottolineate. Notiamo finalmente che in questo documento l'evangelizzazione è solo una parte dell'apostolato, sia pure la più importante.

Il decreto Ad Gentes

E veniamo al documento sull'attività missionaria nel quale la parola « evangelizzazione » ricorre più frequentemente.

Nel n. 6 il Concilio definisce l'attività missionaria. Con questa espressione esso intende « le iniziative principali » con le quali i missionari « svolgono il compito della predicazione del Vangelo e della plantatio Ecclesiae in mezzo a quei popoli che non ancora credono in Cristo ». Poi, specificando meglio, il decreto afferma che « il fine specifico di questa attività missionaria è l'evangelizzazione e la plantatio Ecclesiae in quei popoli e in quei gruppi in cui ancora non esiste » (6, 25). Qui ci sembra evidente che l'evangelizzazione è proprio la predicazione del Vangelo, la predicazione missionaria, che è il primo passo per la plantatio

Ecclesiae. E' da essa infatti che viene la conversione e la fede, primo contatto col Cristo e presupposto di ogni altra attività, con la quale la Chiesa si inserisce tra i popoli dove non ancora esiste. L'evangelizzazione è l'aspetto principale della plantatio Ecclesiae.

Un senso più ampio assume il termine che andiamo illustrando, quando il Concilio l'usa a proposito dei catecumeni che debbono essere iniziati alla vita della Chiesa. Essendo questa apostolica, è necessario, dice il documento, che i catecumeni « imparino a cooperare attivamente all'evangelizzazione e alla edificazione della Chiesa con la testimonianza della vita e la professione della fede » (14, 21). Qui vengono indicati i due stadi della vita della Chiesa alla quale i catecumeni debbono essere iniziati: quella dell'evangelizzazione nella quale si getta il seme della parola di Dio con la testimonianza della vita e la professione della fede, e quella dell'edificazione in cui si cresce nella vita cristiana già ricevuta nel battesimo. Il catecumeno dev'essere già un apostolo tanto all'esterno che all'interno della Chiesa.

Più vasta è l'accezione di « evangelizzazione » quando il decreto parla dei sacerdoti indigeni, i quali debbono attendere « con molto zelo all'opera di evangelizzazione » (n. 20, 13). Con questa però il Concilio intende tanto l'attività con la quale attendono ai propri fedeli, quanto quella con la quale celebrano il culto e predicano il Vangelo. Qui perciò il termine indica la partecipazione alle tre potestà di Cristo, e non solo a quella di predicare. E' nell'esercizio di queste tre potestà che è fatta consistere l'opera de l'« evangelizzazione ». Lo stesso si deve dire quando il decreto parla di « quelle istituzioni che si assumono come dovere specifico il compito dell'evangelizzazione che riguarda tutta quanta la Chiesa » (n. 23, 6). Anche qui ci sembra che l'evangelizzazione riguardi tutto l'apostolato missionario, descritto nel n. 6. Lo stesso senso più ampio la parola riceve quando è usata a proposito di quegli Istituti che si assumono « compiti più urgenti entro l'ambito di una determinata regione, quale ad esempio l'evangelizzazione di certe categorie e di popoli » (n. 27, 15) particolarmente restii alla penetrazione missionaria. Anche qui l'« evangelizzazione » abbraccia tutta una serie di iniziative e non la sola predicazione.

Lo stesso senso più ampio assume in termine, quando il Concilio parla di un Dicastero che elabori un piano organico

di azione, norme direttive e principi adeguati « in ordine alla evangelizzazione » (n. 29, 18), o di « metodi di evangelizzazione da adattare » (n. 29, 41), o di una giusta parte di missionari e di sussidi da destinare all'« evangelizzazione dei non cristiani » (n. 30, 13). Ciò appare anche dal fatto che le citazioni dal n. 23 in poi sono desunte dai cc. IV e V del decreto *Ad Gentes* nei quali si tratta dei missionari e dell'organizzazione dell'attività missionaria, di temi cioè più generali di quelli trattati nei primi capitoli destinati alla natura della missione.

Il termine ricorre spesso anche nel c. VI dedicato alla cooperazione missionaria. Ed anche qui il senso è molto ampio. Si parla, infatti, della « evangelizzazione » come dovere fondamentale del popolo di Dio (n. 35, 1), di chiese che spendono le proprie forze nell'« opera dell'evangelizzazione » (36, 7); della cooperazione dei vescovi così necessaria all'« opera della evangelizzazione » (n. 38, 6); di anime che offrono preghiere e sacrifici per l'« evangelizzazione del mondo » (n. 38, 17); di sacerdoti diocesani che desiderano avere una parte sempre maggiore nella « opera di evangelizzazione » (n. 38, 29); di scarsezza di vocazioni che impedisce l'« evangelizzazione » (n. 38, 30); di sacerdoti diocesani da consacrare all'« evangelizzazione delle genti » (n. 38, 39); di presbiteri che con la predicazione e la catechesi destano interesse « per l'evangelizzazione del mondo » (n. 39, 11); di professori di seminario che espongono ai giovani la vera situazione del mondo perchè sia più chiara la necessità per una più intensa « evangelizzazione dei non cristiani » (n. 39, 21); di Istituti contemplativi che hanno una parte importantissima nell'evangelizzazione del mondo » (n. 40, 2); di laici che cooperano all'opera di « evangelizzazione della Chiesa » (41, 1 e 41, 4). In tutti questi casi l'evangelizzazione è intesa nel senso di attività missionaria, quale che sia la forma con la quale ad essa si coopera. La predicazione del Vangelo ne è certamente la parte essenziale, ma il termine la fa considerare in un complesso più vasto.

Possiamo concludere che l'esame del termine « evangelizzazione » nei documenti conciliari, ci permette di distinguere in esso una triplice accezione: o la sola predicazione missionaria (*Ad Gentes* 6, 26), o tutto il ministero della parola (*Lumen Gentium* 35, 18; *Christus Dominus* 6, 10; *Gaudium et Spes* 44, 13; *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 2, 20 etc.) o tutta l'attività missionaria della Chiesa (*Ad Gentes* 23,6; 27, 15 etc.). In quest'ultimo senso

fa evangelizzazione chiunque promuove, organizza o collabora all'azione della Chiesa per la diffusione del Vangelo tra i popoli che non ancora lo conoscono.

La preevangelizzazione

Quest'ultima accezione ci obbliga a porre un problema. Fanno parte dell'evangelizzazione quelle attività che comunemente gli studiosi indicano col nome di *preevangelizzazione*, quelle cioè con le quasi si dispongono gli uomini all'ascolto e all'accettazione del messaggio rivelato?

Di queste attività il Concilio tratta esplicitamente, ma non le chiama mai con la parola « evangelizzazione ». Così il decreto *Ad Gentes* parlando delle circostanze in cui la Chiesa esercita la sua missione, e che la condizionano nei mezzi da usare, parla anche di una situazione in cui è impossibile annunciare il Vangelo. « Ed ancora, leggiamo nel n. 6, si danno a volta delle circostanze che, almeno temporaneamente, rendono impossibile l'annuncio diretto ed immediato del messaggio evangelico. In questo caso i missionari debbono con pazienza e prudenza, ed anche con grande fiducia, offrire almeno la testimonianza della carità e della bontà di Cristo, preparando così le vie del Signore e rendendolo in qualche modo presente » (n. 6). Questa testimonianza però non è chiamata evangelizzazione. Lo stesso decreto nel n. 11 dichiara la necessità che la Chiesa sia presente nei raggruppamenti umani « attraverso i suoi figli che vivono in mezzo ad essi o ad essi sono inviati » (n. 11). Vivendo in mezzo a questi raggruppamenti essi debbono mostrare loro la carità di Cristo, partecipando a tutti i loro problemi, economici, sociali e culturali, e amandoli con sincero amore, mostrando loro in concreto che cosa sia il Vangelo che non ancora annunciano (n. 12). In tal modo aiuteranno i non cristiani a raggiungere la salvezza e cominceranno a far risplendere il mistero di Cristo. Si tratta perciò di una preparazione al messaggio, veramente necessaria, e talvolta unica possibile. Ma non è detta esplicitamente « evangelizzazione ». Questa si ha quando il Signore « apre una porta alla parola per annunciare il mistero di Cristo » e Cristo viene proclamato con fermezza e franchezza (n. 13).

Tuttavia, anche se il Concilio, parlando delle attività che preparano alla proclamazione del Vangelo, non usa nei loro riguardi il termine « evangelizzazione » nulla vieta che possiamo farle rientrare entro l'ambito di questa. Anzi dobbiamo dire che è il Concilio stesso che ci autorizza a farlo. A partire infatti da c. IV del decreto *Ad Gentes* il termine « evangelizzazione » assume un senso talmente ampio da dover necessariamente includere anche le attività che chiamiamo di « preevangelizzazione ». Tra le attività con le quali i laici cooperano all'evangelizzazione il decreto ricorda espressamente quanto essi fanno o possono fare « in campo economico-sociale per i popoli in via di sviluppo », come pure quanto viene fatto dagli uomini di scienza i quali con le loro ricerche « di carattere storico o scientifico religioso » favoriscono la conoscenza dei popoli e delle religioni, « aiutando così i messaggeri del Vangelo e preparando il dialogo con i non cristiani » (n. 41). Tutto questo lavoro rientra nella cooperazione dei laici all'evangelizzazione.

E' un fatto però che il Concilio ha una certa difficoltà a chiamare queste opere « evangelizzazione ». A nostro parere si tratta di una ragione di carattere psicologico. I Padri conciliari temono che chiamando « evangelizzazione » le opere che abbiamo detto appartenere alla « preevangelizzazione » i missionari esitino eccessivamente a passare alla proclamazione del Vangelo, pensando che gli uomini e i gruppi con i quali sono in contatto non abbiano ancora la necessaria disponibilità. Specialmente negli ambienti in cui la missione incontra particolari difficoltà, il pericolo di rimandare troppo l'annuncio evangelico non ci sembra infondato.

Lo stesso Paolo VI nel messaggio indirizzato alla Chiesa per la giornata missionaria del 1970, parlando dei rapporti tra evangelizzazione e sviluppo, e usando per la prima volta in un documento pontificio la parola « preevangelizzazione », chiedendosi quale delle due realtà dovesse precedere, rispose che dipendeva dal metodo. Lo sviluppo potrebbe avere una « priorità temporale ». E continuava: « Si parla di pre-evangelizzazione, cioè l'accostamento dei futuri cristiani per via di carità, di aiuto, di esempio, di convivenza, di presenza. Poi si parla di servizio: dove prima arriva il Vangelo, arriva la carità; è una testimonianza simultanea all'evangelizzazione, della sua validità umana: ecco le scuole, gli ospedali, l'assistenza sociale, l'educazione professionale; è il premio che viene alla fine dell'evan-

gelizzazione, cioè la nuova arte del vivere bene ». Affrontando poi direttamente la questione se le opere della preevangelizzazione appartenessero o no alla evangelizzazione, il Papa rispose: « Ma sul piano pratico coloro che hanno assunto l'impegno missionario, devono essere convinti che l'evangelizzazione si compie anche mediante le attività rivolte allo sviluppo temporale ed umano dei popoli al quale è rivolta. Tali opere possono fondersi con l'evangelizzazione, quando, elevate al livello della carità, hanno anche ragione di fine, ed anche quando, avendo ragione di mezzo, possono, in via esecutiva precedere ed anche compiere l'opera evangelizzatrice » [14]. Della stessa opinione è il documento pubblicato recentemente dalla Congregazione per l'evangelizzazione dei popoli dal titolo « L'evangelizzazione oggi sotto lo aspetto teologico e pastorale ». Esso afferma che « la presenza tra gli uomini, il lavoro per il loro sviluppo, la testimonianza della vita, tutti questi elementi sono necessari e fanno parte dell'opera dell'evangelizzazione », pur affermando che « nè debbono sostituire la Parola, e ancora meno escluderla » [15]. Tanto le parole del Papa, quanto quelle della Congregazione Romana, sono indicative dello stato d'animo che s'accompagna al termine « preevangelizzazione », quello cioè che ci si fermi ad essa, col pretesto che già si fa evangelizzazione. Invece, secondo i documenti ora citati, in tanto le opere della preevangelizzazione appartengono all'evangelizzazione in quanto sono da essa esigite, ad essa finalizzate, o da essa promananti. Perchè quindi una attività possa dirsi appartenente alla evangelizzazione deve avere in qualche modo relazione alla proclamazione del Vangelo, che dell'evangelizzazione è il centro verso cui tutto deve convergere.

2. L'EVANGELIZZAZIONE IN ALCUNI DOCUMENTI POST-CONCILIARI

Dal Concilio nel quale il termine « evangelizzazione » è contrassegnato da una grande fluidità, che va da un'accezione tecnica a una più vasta, tendente ad abbracciare tutta la missione della Chiesa, passiamo all'esame di alcuni documenti post-conciliari, per vedere quale significato il termine sia venuto assumendo in

[14] L'*Osservatore Romano*, 17 Giugno 1970.
[15] I parte, 2e.

questi ultimi anni fino al Sinodo dei vescovi del Settembre-Ottobre 1974. Ci atteniamo di proposito ai documenti di una certa ufficialità, prescindendo dalle opinioni dei teologi, anche se, praticamente, queste sono riflesse nei documenti stessi.

I documenti dei vescovi italiani

Nel 1970 la Conferenza episcopale italiana (CEI) pubblicava un voluminoso documento dal titolo *Il rinnovamento della catechesi* [16], che doveva servire di base per la compilazione dei vari catechismi, destinati a prendere il posto di quello ormai invecchiato detto di « Pio X ». In esso l'evangelizzazione è definita come segue: « L'evangelizzazione propriamente detta è il primo annuncio della salvezza a chi, per ragioni varie, non ne è a conoscenza o ancora non crede » [17]. In uno scritto posteriore degli stessi vescovi dal titolo *Evangelizzazione e sacramenti* troviamo una definizione abbastanza diversa. « Con l'evangelizzazione, leggiamo, la Chiesa rende presente, nel segno della parola, la persona di Cristo e ne attualizza l'insegnamento. Anzi il fine a cui tende l'evangelizzazione è la comunione con Cristo e, per Cristo, con il Padre » [18].

Basta una semplice lettura per accorgersi che le due definizioni differiscono notevolmente. La prima indica una sola forma dell'annuncio evangelico, quella destinata ai non credenti, o perchè non hanno mai ascoltato il Vangelo, o perchè, pur avendolo ascoltato, non ancora credono. L'evangelizzazione cioè è destinata alla conversione. La seconda definizione, invece, è molto più generale. Essa fa coincidere l'evangelizzazione col ministero della parola, prescindendo dalle forme in cui si rifrange. Può quindi estendersi tanto all'annuncio missionario, quanto alla catechesi e all'omelia.

Ancora fluidi nella loro concezione sono i vescovi italiani nella risposta data alla Segreteria del Sinodo, riguardo allo strumento di lavoro fatto loro pervenire nel marzo 1973 [19]. « Evan-

[16] *Il Rinnovamento della catechesi*, Edizioni pastorali italiane, Roma 1970.
[17] op. cit., p. 29.
[18] *Evangelizzazione e sacramenti*, ed. Opera della Regalità, Milano 1973, n. 43.
[19] Il documento ha per titolo: *De evangelizatione mundi huius tem-*

gelizzare, leggiamo nella prima parte, significa annunciare il messaggio della salvezza all'uomo non in maniera qualsiasi, ma in modo che lo ascolti, e lo accolga. Perciò affinchè la evangelizzazione sia efficace, è necessario conoscere l'uomo a cui essa è rivolta, la situazione storica in cui vive, i condizionamenti culturali e sociologici a cui è sottoposto, in modo da adattare il messaggio alle sue capacità di ascolto e di comprensione » [20]. E' una definizione tutta centrata sull'annuncio del Vangelo, in funzione del quale vanno esaminate le varie componenti che contribuiscono all'evangelizzazione.

Più oltre però, nella seconda parte della risposta, accingendosi a darci una serie di riflessioni teologiche sull'evangelizzazione, questa è definita in un modo un pò diverso. « L'evangelizzazione, vi si dice, è l'atto col quale la Chiesa, sotto l'impulso dello Spirito Santo, annuncia ed attua la salvezza che il Padre nel suo infinito amore, offre a tutti gli uomini in Cristo e per mezzo di Cristo morto e risorto », e continuando rileva in essa una struttura interna che ne fa una realtà essenzialmente trinitaria, ed una esterna che ne fa una realtà ecclesiale.

Come si vede la prima definizione, o descrizione, è meno comprensiva della seconda. Essa sottolinea l'annuncio e il suo effetto immediato che è la fede. La seconda invece, non parla più di « messaggio della salvezza », ma solo di salvezza e l'annuncio ha come scopo non solo la proclamazione con la conseguente accettazione, ma anche l'attuazione della salvezza. Ora siccome la salvezza si attua nei sacramenti, possiamo dire che la seconda definizione aggiunge alla prima un elemento nuovo, cioè la relazione ai sacramenti, come vien subito dopo esplicitato, aggiungendo che, in tal modo, l'evangelizzazione esprime non un aspetto soltanto, ma tutta la missione della Chiesa, come viene spiegato subito dopo, dove si esclude che possa essere limitata al solo annuncio evangelico [22].

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poris, E Civitate Vaticana 1973, inviato a tutte le conferenze episcopali per la preparazione del Sinodo dei vescovi del 1974.

[20] Cfr. *Il Regno-doc.* 1 Luglio 1974, p. 352.

[21] op. cit., p. 355.

[22] « Intesa, perciò, in senso pieno, l'evangelizzazione non può essere ridotta al solo annuncio del messaggio della salvezza e tanto meno al primo annuncio ... ma deve comprendere anche l'attività sacramentale ... Si può quindi dire che nell'evangelizzazione è compresa e attuata tutta la missione della Chiesa » (op. cit., p. 356).

Il congresso di Nagpur

Il congresso di Nagpur, tenutosi nel 1971 in occasione del centenario di S. Tommaso apostolo, e dedicato ai problemi dell'evangelizzazione in India, ci descrive l'evangelizzazione come il mezzo attraverso cui si realizza la missione della Chiesa. « Per evangelizzazione, leggiamo nella dichiarazione finale del congresso, intendiamo la comunicazione della Buona Novella della salvezza di Gesù Cristo, mediante la quale gli uomini sono resi capaci di partecipare nello spirito di Cristo che li rinnova e riconcilia con Dio. Ciò che la Chiesa compie non solo con la proclamazione (Mc 16, 15 ss.), ma anche attraverso una vita di testimonianza (Lc 24, 47-48) con la quale procura di mostrare che la comunicazione del messaggio di Cristo non è semplicemente verbale, ma la testimonianza di tutta la vita vissuta nello spirito e che irraggia la divina agape nella fratellanza della comunità. Come tale è una forza dinamica nel mondo e l'espressione storica della nuova umanità radunata, liberata e ricreata in Cristo mediante lo Spirito. Essa non può essere ridotta a un fatto di organizzazione ecclesiastica, ma rimane una forza carismatica della Chiesa » [23]. Si dice ancora che l'evangelizzazione è l'« espressione della fratellanza cristiana che comunica agli altri ciò che è stato affidato alla Chiesa perchè lo comunichi a tutti gli uomini » [24].

Si tratta di una definizione molto ampia che abbraccia tutto l'ambito della predicazione, sia quello missionario che quello catechetico e omiletico, e le condizioni che lo rendono possibile, cioè la testimonianza e le conseguenze che essa è destinata a produrre sia nella Chiesa che oltre. Manca solo un esplicito riferimento all'Eucaristia, benchè questo potrebbe essere incluso nella nozione di comunità cristiana che irraggia l'amore divino. Il che non può essere senza l'Eucaristia.

Nella relazione però del comitato speciale « su evangelizzazione dialogo e sviluppo », redatto da un certo numero di teologi, l'evangelizzazione è definita in un senso più ristretto, come « la proclamazione della Buona Novella della salvezza in Gesù Cristo,

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[23] *Evangelization, Dialogue and Development* (Documenta Missionalia 5), edited by M. Dhavamony, Roma 1972, p. 5-6.

[24] op. cit., p. 6.

agli uomini che non lo conoscono per condurli alla fede e alla fratellanza con lui »[25]. Questa definizione è strettamente missionaria: ha presente il primo annuncio del mistero della salvezza fatto ai non cristiani per condurli alla fede in Cristo. Tuttavia terminando l'esposizione, la relazione tiene a far notare che l'evangelizzazione non si limita a questo. Essa include la molteplice azione dello Spirito mediante la Chiesa, cioè « tutti gli sforzi, le sofferenze, le opere buone intraprese sotto l'azione dello Spirito Santo per realizzare in tutti i tempi, la salvezza degli uomini in Gesù Cristo »[26]. E' una spiegazione, crediamo noi, che senza rinnegare il senso missionario dato precedentemente al termine, cerca di far notare come la proclamazione del Vangelo suppone ed è preparata da tutta l'azione dello Spirito che si serve degli sforzi e delle sofferenze della Chiesa per le vie al Cristo.

Quasi nulla, invece, troviamo nel documento di Medellin, pubblicato dai vescovi dell'America latina nel 1968, nel quale si dice che l'evangelizzazione del continente trova serie difficoltà « e che finora la Chiesa ha insistito più sulla sacramentalizzazione che sull'evangelizzazione »[27]. In ambedue i casi il termine indica il ministero della parola in generale.

Altri documenti

In un contesto strettamente missionario, il *Sedos*[28] ha adottato questa definizione operativa dell'evangelizzazione desumendola dall'AACC[29]. Essa potrebbe essere descritta come « questo processo che rende il Vangelo presente in una data situazione (cultura ecc.) mediante la presenza attiva di una comunità cristiana, che offre a un non cristiano (nella stessa situazione) l'occasione di incontrare e di accettare il Cristo nella fede »[30]. L'evangelizzazione perciò suppone l'apertura della Chiesa locale

[25] op. cit., p. 17.
[26] op. cit., p. 18.
[27] *Medellin-Documenti*, Ed. Dehoniane, Bologna 1969, p. 61.
[28] La sigla indica il servizio di documentazione dei Superiori maggiori degli Istituti missionari con sede in Roma.
[29] La sigla significa: *All Africa Conference of Churches*.
[30] Abbiamo desunto questa descrizione dal n. 33 della rivista *Pro Mundi Vita* (Note Speciale n. 33) pubblicato in occasione del Sinodo dei vescovi.

verso i non cristiani, e questa apertura è un criterio del grado di evangelizzazione reale di una comunità. Tanto che il documento afferma esplicitamente: « Evangelizzare significa: prevedere e promuovere occasioni di incontro »[31]. Una definizione veramente operativa, nella quale si mettono in evidenza le condizioni dell'evangelizzazione piuttosto che la sua natura.

Molto più chiara è la definizione adottata dai protestanti nel loro congresso sull'evangelizzazione tenuto nel luglio scorso (1974). Leggiamo nel n. 4 della cosidetta « Lausanne Covenant »: « Evangelizzare è diffondere la buona novella che Gesù Cristo è morto per i nostri peccati, che è risuscitato dai morti secondo le Scritture, che regna come Signore e che egli offre ora, a tutti quelli che si pentono e credono, il perdono dei peccati e il dono dello Spirito Santo per renderci liberi ». Continuando la dichiarazione afferma che la presenza cristiana nel mondo e l'amore per il prossimo sono indispensabili all'evangelizzazione. Poi aggiunge: « Ma l'evangelizzazione stessa è la proclamazione del Cristo, in vista di persuadere gli uomini a venire personalmente a lui per essere riconciliati con Dio. Quando trasmettiamo l'invito del Vangelo non abbiamo il diritto di nascondere ciò che costa nell'essere discepoli di Cristo ». Come conseguenza della evangelizzazione si indica l'obbedienza al Cristo, l'integrazione nella sua Chiesa e un servizio responsabile nel mondo. Nel n. 5 sottolineando la relazione tra evangelizzazione e impegno sociopolitico nel mondo, li distingue nettamente.

Nella riunione plenaria della Sacra Congregazione per la evangelizzazione dei popoli, questa realtà è intesa di nuovo in un senso strettamente missionario. « In queste pagine, leggiamo nel documento conclusivo, il termine 'evangelizzazione' deve intendersi nel suo senso specifico d'evangelizzazione missionaria: si tratta del primo annuncio del Cristo e del suo Vangelo ai non cristiani mediante il quale è suscitata la fede »[32].

Un'altra descrizione dell'evangelizzazione la troviamo nel documento edito con questo titolo dalla Conferenza episcopale del Perù nel gennaio 1973. Vi leggiamo: « Evangelizzare è proclamare la Buona Novella e contribuire a che questa parola abbia l'effettività storica e sociale che le è propria, entro la sua azione trasformatrice del mondo ». Una descrizione forse

[31] op. cit., p. 4.
[32] Introduzione 1a.

poco chiara, ma che le parole seguenti si affrettano a chiarire: « Così intesa, continuano i vescovi peruviani, l'evangelizzazione abbraccia tutta la missione della Chiesa », la quale consiste nel condurre tutti gli uomini, per mezzo di Cristo nello Spirito Santo, alla comunione col Padre [33]. Più ristretto è invece il senso di « evangelizzazione » in un documento di tutte le Conferenze episcopali dell'America Latina (CELAM) scritto in preparazione del Sinodo dei vescovi, in cui l'evangelizzazione implica tutto il processo di maturazione della fede, e, si nota espressamente, non la sola predicazione missionaria. Per questo si evita anche il termine « rievangelizzazione » perchè potrebbe far pensare che l'opera apostolica nel continente debba partire da zero. Il che non è esatto [34].

Il Sinodo dei vescovi 1974

E veniamo al Sinodo dei vescovi 1974, che ha dato l'occasione ad alcune delle definizioni o descrizioni già ricordate. Esso, come si sa, ha avuto per tema *l'evangelizzazione del mondo contemporaneo.*

La celebrazione del Sinodo è stata preceduta dalla pubblicazione di due documenti, nei quali troviamo anche una definizione del tema preso in esame. Nel 1973 la Segreteria del Sinodo inviò a tutte le conferenze episcopali del mondo, perchè ne facessero oggetto di esame, un fascicolo dal titolo *De evangelizatione mundi huius temporis.* Nel proemio troviamo una enumerazione dei vari sensi in cui può essere inteso il termine « Evangelizzazione ». « Il termine *evangelizzazione,* leggiamo a p. 5, può significare oggi più cose. Esso può indicare, anzitutto, qualsiasi attività, con cui in qualunque modo il mondo viene trasformato conformemente alla volontà di Dio creatore e redentore; poi ancora, esprime l'attività sacerdotale, profetica e regale, con cui la Chiesa viene edificata secondo l'intenzione di Cristo. Più frequente è la terza accezione del termine, con cui si indica quell'attività per mezzo della quale viene proclamato e spiegato il Vangelo, ed è suscitata la fede viva nei non

[33] *Evangelización.* Documento de la XLII Asamblea episcopal peruana, Enero 1973, p. 5-6.

[34] *Algunos aspectos de la Evangelización en America latina.* Elementos de reflexión que el CELAM ofrece al Sinodo. Mayo 1974, p. 20, nota 58.

cristiani e alimentata nei cristiani (predicazione missionaria, catechetica, omiletica ecc.). Per ultimo il significato del termine " evangelizzazione " si restringe a indicare il primo annuncio del Vangelo fatto ai non credenti, con cui è suscitata la fede (predicazione missionaria: kerygma) » [35]. Il documento nota che i vari sensi si intrecciano tra di loro, per cui le attività da essi designate non sempre possono essere ben distinte. Di qui le ambiguità cui la parola dà luogo, perchè con essa chi intende una cosa e chi un'altra. Per ragione di chiarezza i redattori del documento, che è uno « strumento di lavoro » intendono la parola « evangelizzazione » nel terzo senso, e cioè come l'attività con cui la Chiesa proclama il Vangelo, perchè ne germogli, si dispieghi e accresca la fede. Questo testo è importante perchè fa il « punto » della situazione in quel momento, cioè nel 1973.

In un ulteriore « strumento di lavoro » elaborato dalla stessa Segreteria del Sinodo in vista della discussione da tenersi nell'Aula sinodale nel Settembre-Ottobre 1974, e che reca la data del 7 Giugno, il termine « evangelizzazione » subisce un'evoluzione, dovuta evidentemente alle reazioni delle Conferenze episcopali al primo « foglio di lavoro » dell'anno precedente. « La voce " evangelizzazione ", si legge nel n. 24, significa il complesso di tutte le attività, con le quali gli uomini vengono condotti alla partecipazione del mistero di Cristo proclamato nel Vangelo ». E continua: « L'evangelizzazione nella sua pienezza non può essere concepita, se non risplenda la testimonianza della carità, se i sacramenti non vengono amministrati, e le istituzioni fondate ». Più oltre si specifica meglio: « Ma soprattutto, l'evangelizzazione non si può concepire se non si predica la conoscenza di Cristo: in essa, infatti, secondo l'uso costante del Nuovo Testamento, la predicazione del mistero di Cristo, occupa la parte centrale » [36]. Un'altra chiarificazione l'abbiamo nelle pagine seguenti. Lo « strumento di lavoro » ritornando sul concetto di evangelizzazione, afferma che con essa « si intende ogni attività con la quale il popolo di Dio suscita e alimenta la fede viva ». E specifica che in questa attività si debbono considerare

[35] *De Evangelizatione mundi huius temporis,* già citato alla nota 19, p. 5.

[36] *De evangelizatione mundi huius temporis.* Instrumentum laboris ad usum sodalium coetus generalis synodi episcoporum. E Civitate Vaticana 1974 n. 24 p. 12-13.

specialmente tre compiti della Chiesa, cioè la predicazione della Parola di Dio, la testimonianza della vita e l'amministrazione dei sacramenti, perchè eccellono tra i vari aspetti dell'evangelizzazione [37].

L'evangelizzazione nel Sinodo dei vescovi 1974

Forse sembrerà strano: ma il Sinodo dei vescovi 1974 non si è preoccupato molto di dare una definizione dell'evangelizzazione. Forse la supponeva già nota dai due « strumenti di lavoro », specialmente dall'ultimo. Possiamo però affermare che in tutti i Padri sinodali era evidente che per essi l'evangelizzazione riguardasse tutta la missione della Chiesa, in quanto però finalizzata all'annuncio evangelico, dal quale proviene la fede, fondamento dei sacramenti e di tutta la vita cristiana. Indubbiamente però una trattazione a parte, in cui si mirasse a dare una definizione o una descrizione di questa realtà, è mancata.

Ma se è mancato lo sforzo di arrivare a una definizione scientifica dell'evangelizzazione, non sono mancate descrizioni più o meno empiriche che potessero servire a comprendere i vari interventi che avevano luogo nell'Aula sinodale o nei gruppi di studio. E' stato questo in particolare il compito dei relatori del Sinodo.

Il relatore dell'Africa, prima di presentare la situazione dell'evangelizzazione in quel continente, non ha voluto omettere di pronunciarsi sul significato della parola. « La parola " *evangelizzazione* ", egli ha detto, si usa oggi in vari sensi » notando però che, in generale, se ne sottolineano due, in base ai quali si distingue un'*evangelizzazione missionaria* destinata a comunicare la fede ai non cristiani, e un'*evangelizzazione pastorale* che ha come scopo di nutrire e sviluppare la fede nel popolo di Dio. Essa abbraccia la testimonianza della vita, la distribuzione dei sacramenti, l'istruzione catechetica, la predicazione omiletica, l'edificazione e il consolidamento della comunità cristiana. Il relatore ci tiene a manifestare che quanto egli dice è in armonia con quanto riferito nello « strumento di lavoro » che è alla base delle discussioni del Sinodo [38]. Egli inoltre distingue

[37] op. cit., p. 13 n. 26.

[38] *De evangelizatione mundi huius temporis.* Pars prior. Relationes quibus mutua communicatio experientiarum introducitur. Typis polyglottis Vaticanis 1974, p. 5.

tra l'evangelizzazione e la cristianizzazione. La prima importa l'annuncio evangelico e il suo ascolto da parte dei destinatari, la seconda invece comprende anche la conversione. Si può quindi essere evangelizzati e non convertiti. Il relatore crede di poter dire che in Africa il 35 % della popolazione non ha mai ascoltato il Vangelo [39].

Per il relatore dell'America latina, l'evangelizzazione è opera di tutto il popolo di Dio ed abbraccia tutta la sua attività, cioè la parola, la testimonianza e il sacramento. Suo fine è la conversione, e il suo « termine la salvezza integrale e la liberazione piena nel Cristo » [40]. Nell'America latina essa deve iniziare dalla religiosità popolare, nella quale ci sono elementi validi capaci di condurre a una fede personale e autentica [41].

Nelle altre relazioni non troviamo una definizione dell'evangelizzazione. Essa è data per scontata.

Il relatore della secondaa parte dello « strumento di lavoro » destinato alla chiarificazione di alcuni « temi teologici » contenuti nell'evangelizzazione, è stato più generoso nel darci una definizione di questa realtà, anche se l'ha fatto, per così dire, per necessità di cose. « L'evangelizzazione, leggiamo nella sua relazione, è in qualche modo la vita stessa della Chiesa e la sua prima attività » [42]. Nella pagina seguente, dopo d'aver affermato che ogni indagine sulla natura della evangelizzazione deve partire dal mandato di Cristo (Mt 28, 18-20; Mc 16, 15-16), conclude con queste parole: « Secondo il mandato del nostro Maestro e Redentore, l'opera dell'evangelizzazione consiste nel predicare il Vangelo a ogni creatura, nell'insegnare a tutte le genti per impiantarvi la Chiesa; la quale opera incomincia col sacramento del battesimo e si perfeziona con gli altri sacramenti, in particolare con l'Eucaristia ». Fine dell'evangelizzazione è la fede, come appare dalle stesse parole di Cristo (Mc 16, 16) [43].

Anche per questo relatore perciò l'evangelizzazione comprende non solo la fede della quale è il veicolo, ma tutta l'attività con la quale la Chiesa viene edificata e cresce nella sua vita.

[39] op. cit., p. 14.

[40] op. cit., p. 20.

[41] op. cit., p. 22.

[42] *De Evangelizatione mundi huius temporis.* Pars Altera. Relatio in qua themata theologica cum experientiis connexa clarificantur. Typis polyglottis Vaticanis 1974, p. 6.

[43] op. cit., p. 7.

Le relazioni dei Segretari speciali

Come è risaputo da chi ha seguito i lavori conciliari, lo « strumento di lavoro » sul quale si sono articolate le discussioni, comprendeva due parti: la prima dedicata alla comunicazione delle esperienze nel campo dell'evangelizzazione, la seconda alla riflessione su alcuni temi teologici da esse implicati. Alla fine di ogni parte un « Segretario speciale » era incaricato di fare il punto sullo stato dei lavori. Ciò poteva offrire loro l'occasione di chiarire, se necessario, il concetto di evangelizzazione.

In realtà così ha fatto, il primo Segretario, il P. Amalorpavadass, il quale nella terza parte della sua relazione, ci dà una definizione dell'evangelizzazione. « L'evangelizzazione, egli dice, si può intendere come la proclamazione. mediante le parole i fatti e la stessa vita, della buona novella della salvezza recata in Gesù Cristo a tutti gli uomini » [44]. Successivamente egli spiega i modi e i condizionamenti in cui questa proclamazione avviene.

Il Segretario invece della seconda parte, il P. D. Grasso SJ, nella conclusione della sua relazione, faceva notare come nessun Padre sinodale avesse dedicato particolare attenzione alla definizione della evangelizzazione, se si eccettua l'accenno a definirla secondo un testo del libro degli Atti (2, 42). Egli perciò faceva una breve storia del senso in cui la parola è stata intesa negli ultimi anni, fino allo strumento di lavoro sul quale i Padri sinodali discutevano [45].

Nel documento finale del Sinodo non si dà alcuna definizione particolare, ritenendosi come acquisita che l'evangelizzazione indichi tutta la missione della Chiesa, in particolare poi l'annuncio evangelico sia ai non cristiani, sia ai già cristiani per farli crescere nella fede.

Concludendo perciò questa seconda parte del nostro studio, possiamo dire che l'evoluzione post-conciliare, mentre ha ritenuto i sensi del termine « evangelizzazione » già presenti nel

[44] *De Evangelizatione mundi huius temporis.* Pars Prior. Mutua communicatio experientiarum synthesis relationum et interventionum Patrum, Typis polyglottis Vaticanis 1974, p. 15.

[45] *De Evangelizatione mundi huius temporis.* Pars altera. Themata quaedam theologica cum experientiis connexa clarificantur. Synthesis relationum et interventionum Patrum. Typis polyglottis Vaticanis 1974, p. 16-17.

Concilio, ha sviluppato la tendenza già chiara nel decreto *Ad Gentes* che nei suoi ultimi capitoli intende con essa l'attività missionaria della Chiesa, sotto qualunque forma venga esercitata, dalla preghiera della Suora di clausura, alla parola del missionario che annuncia il Cristo a una popolazione africana sperduta nella giungla. La Chiesa post-conciliare cioè va sempre più estendendo la parola « evangelizzazione » a indicare tutta la sua missione. Potremmo dire che nella Chiesa tutto è « evangelizzazione », perchè con tutto ciò che essa fa, realizza la sua missione. Tuttavia in questa missione si sottolinea il primato della predicazione. Nè poteva essere altrimenti. E' dalla predicazione, infatti, che viene la fede, fondamento di tutto l'ordine soprannaturale e di tutta la vita della Chiesa. In tal modo il termine « evangelizzazione » è venuto a sostituire quello di « apostolato » una volta più comune.

Le ragioni di un successo

Se ci domandiamo il perchè della « fortuna » del termine « evangelizzazione » divenuto così popolare negli ultimi anni di quest'epoca postconciliare, ci troviamo di fronte a un complesso di ragioni, nelle quali si riflette il travaglio della Chiesa di oggi. Anzi tutto esso ha il vantaggio di suonare bene all'orecchio, di far cioè pensare all'attività missionaria, liberata però da quella certa patina di « vecchio » che l'uso gli aveva accumulato intorno. La stessa esigenza che dopo la guerra portò al successo la parola « missionario » e « missione », oggi ha portato al successo la parola « evangelizzazione ». La Chiesa di oggi ha preso coscienza di dover ridiventare missionaria, non solo in quanto è chiamata a estendere la conoscenza del Vangelo là dove esso non è stato ancora annunciato, ma anche nel senso che la distinzione tra paesi missionari e non missionari è scomparsa o quasi. I non cristiani, nel senso più stretto della parola, non esistono soltanto in Africa o in Asia: esistono anche nelle grandi città moderne, all'ombra delle grandi chiese, che hanno visto fiorire la fede di secoli e secoli di generazioni credenti. La Chiesa post-conciliare si rende sempre più consapevole di dover ripredicare il Vangelo, di dover ricristianizzare l'Occidente una volta detto « cristiano ». Non ha più senso perciò riservare la parola « evangelizzazione » alla predicazione missionaria, all'annuncio del Cristo riservato ai paesi che la forza dell'abitudine ci fa ancora

chiamare « di missione ». L'evangelizzazione non è un'attività da fare in alcune parti del mondo, ma da fare dappertutto, perchè dappertutto ci sono uomini e donne che non hanno mai sentito il nome di Cristo, o se l'hanno sentito, ciò è avvenuto in un senso che con la figura del Redentore ha poco da fare. Questo spiega anche perchè, oltre alla predicazione missionaria, « evangelizzazione » tende sempre più a indicare tutto il ministero della parola. In qualche senso potremmo dire che oggi non c'è che la predicazione missionaria, cioè la evangelizzazione che tende ad assorbire anche il campo della catechesi e dell'omelia.

C'è poi, in questa parola, espressa un'esigenza, propria di tutta la Chiesa attuale: quella di ripensarsi in funzione della missione da assolvere nel mondo, che è quella di recare agli uomini la salvezza di Cristo. E' questo lo sforzo che stanno facendo, le chiese particolari, come risulta dalle risposte inviate a Roma in seguito ala consultazione effettuata in preparazione del Sinodo, ed è questo lo sforzo che ha fatto la Chiesa universale nella celebrazione del Sinodo stesso. E' stata, ne siamo convinti, una felice intuizione del Papa quando ha voluto l'evangelizzazione del mondo moderno come tema del Sinodo, non restringendo la trattazione a una sola parte della Chiesa, ma estendendola a tutte le chiese indistintamente, quale che sia la situazione religiosa e cristiana in cui si trovano. E' forse la prima volta che la Chiesa prende coscienza esplicita, traducendola in pratica, di quanto afferma il decreto *Ad Gentes* il quale, pur parlando di « missioni » al plurale, tende a eliminare questa parola al plurale, per usarla solo al singolare (n. 6). Non esistono, propriamente parlando « le missioni », ma soltanto « la missione » della Chiesa, quella ricevuta da Gesù Cristo. Ciò che la caratterizza, e che per il passato ha fatto parlare di « missioni » è la situazione in cui è chiamata ad esercitarla. La Chiesa è sempre e dovunque missionaria, sempre e dovunque evangelizzatrice, a Roma e a Dublino, come a Tokyo e a Calcutta. Non dovunque però può usare gli stessi mezzi o usarli allo stesso modo. C'è addirittura una situazione in cui è costretta a limitarsi alla sola « testimonianza » della vita, non essendo possibile predicare con la parola. Ma anche in questo caso essa evangelizza, essa è missionaria, in quanto esegue la missione affidatale da Cristo.

Giustamente perciò il Papa ha chiamato tutta la Chiesa, quella del primo, del secondo e del terzo mondo, a interrogarsi sull'evangelizzazione, perchè in ognuno di questi tre « mondi » essa evangelizza, esegue cioè il mandato affidatole da Cristo di predicare il Vangelo a ogni creatura (Mc 16, 15).

All'interno poi della comunità cristiana, diciamo così credente, di quella cioè che ogni domenica si raccoglie intorno all'Eucaristia, la sottolineatura dell'evangelizzazione, importa l'affermazione della priorità di un ministero, la cui importanza e la cui funzione si era un po' affievolita nella coscienza di molti pastori di anime. E' la questione oggi così attuale che va sotto il nome di « evangelizzazione e sacramento ». Quale di queste due funzioni della Chiesa occupa il primo posto? Teologicamente il problema non si dovrebbe nemmeno porre, perchè le due realtà sono inseparabilmente unite. Storicamente invece il problema si pone, ed è stato posto per la prima volta nell'America latina, dove lo scarso numero di sacerdoti non consente di dare a tutti i battezzati l'istruzione religiosa di cui hanno bisogno, perchè la fede loro comunicata nel battesimo si sviluppi e cresca fino alla maturità di Cristo.

In queste circostanze, si sono chiesto alcuni sacerdoti di questi paesi, vale ancora la pena continuare a battezzare tutti, o non è piuttosto preferibile battezzare solo coloro che si possono poi evangelizzare? Nel primo caso si battezzeranno tutti coloro i cui genitori ne faranno richiesta, dando poi loro l'istruzione religiosa nella misura in cui sarà possibile; nel secondo caso invece, si battezzeranno unicamente quei bambini la cui formazione religiosa potrà essere assicurata dai genitori stessi, o dalla comunità. Come si vede, non si tratta di una questione accademica, ma di una questione dai grandi riflessi pastorali. Successivamente il problema è stato posto anche in Europa, ed oggi costituisce uno degli interrogativi più « scottanti » della Chiesa, la quale è convinta che non si può più come una volta battezzare e poi lasciare l'educazione religiosa all'ambiente cristiano in cui la vita si svolgeva e che costituiva una specie di « catecumenato sociale ». Oggi in cui l'ambiente è venuto meno, si possono ancora battezzare i bambini delle famiglie che ne fanno richiesta — e sono la quasi totalità — se poi non si è certi di poter dare loro l'educazione religiosa che il battesimo

esige? A chi allora bisogna assegnare la priorità: all'evangelizzazione o alla sacramentalizzazione?

Il diffondersi della parola « evangelizzazione » sta a dimostrare che le simpatie vanno verso di essa, che è essa, l'evangelizzazione, che è riguardata come più importante e prioritaria. Ciò non significa che non bisogna più battezzare i bambini o che bisogna rimandarne il battesimo all'età adulta. Significa soltanto che bisogna trovare il modo di unire le due componenti della vita cristiana. E' in questo senso che è stata organizzata la campagna della Chiesa italiana nota con l'espressione « evangelizzazione e sacramenti ». Non ostante però l'asserita necessità di unire le due componenti, è innegabile che l'interesse di molti va verso la priorità dell'evangelizzazione. In un tale clima è sorta la questione del « battesimo a tappe » che tanto scalpore ha suscitato in Francia e fuori [46].

In questa riflessione sulle ragioni della « fortuna » di un termine non saremmo completi, se non accennassimo anche a un'altra ragione, sulla quale forse non tutti saranno d'accordo, ma che a noi sembra non priva di fondamento. Viviamo in un'epoca in cui si parla molto di « identità ». Tutti, persone e istituzioni, sono alla ricerca della propria identità. Non si tratta di una questione alla moda. Del resto, anche se lo fosse, ciò avverrebbe perchè nella questione c'è una parte di verità, per quanto esagerata.

E' un fatto che nel mondo attuale, ogni uomo e ogni istituzione sente il bisogno di recare il proprio contributo alla costruzione di una società più giusta, e si chiede quale questo contributo possa essere. La Chiesa fa lo stesso. Pur avendo una missione divina, essa vive nel mondo e ne partecipa le vicende. Non può quindi non chiedersi che cosa possa fare, in quanto Chiesa, per contribuire essa pure alla costruzione di questa società. E' in questa prospettiva che il Magistero ha pubblicato alcuni dei documenti più significativi degli ultimi anni, come la *Pacem in terris,* la *Gaudium et Spes,* la *Populorum Progressio,* la *De Justitia in mundo.* Con questi esso ha inteso non solo incoraggiare quanti lavorano in questa impresa, ma dire una sua propria parola, indicare il suo proprio contributo. E questa parola, secondo noi, è proprio « evangelizzazione ». Il compito

[46] Cfr. il nostro volume *Dobbiamo ancora battezzare i bambini?* Cittadella Editrice, Assisi 1972, c. X.

specifico della Chiesa in un mondo che vuol costruirsi dalle fondamenta, è proprio quello di evangelizzarlo, di recargli la Buona Novella di Cristo, di dirgli cioè qual'è la sua origine, il suo destino, il senso della vita e della storia. Il progresso, lo sappiamo tutti, è una realtà ambigua, può condurre l'uomo alla felicità, come essergli causa di infelicità. E, quello che in realtà è avvenuto. E' un fatto che i popoli più progrediti, benchè abbiano tutto sul piano dei bisogni materiali, sono i meno felici, se dobbiamo giudicarli dai fatti sociologici che in essi hanno luogo, e che l'arte e la letteratura cercano di descrivere e di interpretare. Perchè il progresso per questi popoli si è risolto in una realtà contraria al loro bene? Unicamente a causa di questa ambiguità. Per rendere l'uomo felice, il progresso scientifico e tecnico dev'essere subordinato al suo fine, a quello per cui è stato creato e dà un senso a tutto ciò che fa. Ma qual'è questo fine?

E' qui che s'inserisce il Cristo col suo messaggio annunciato dalla Chiesa, è qui che s'inserisce l'evangelizzazione, perchè è mediante questa che la Chiesa rende noto all'uomo il messaggio di Cristo. E' mediante questo annuncio che la Chiesa s'inserisce nel progresso umano, e vi porta un proprio contributo, il più fondamentale di tutti, perchè in funzione di esso che vanno perseguiti tutti gli altri fini, essendo essi solo dei mezzi al servizio del fine ultimo. Di qui, a nostro parere, uno dei motivi dell'attualità dell'evangelizzazione e della sua tendenza a monopolizzare l'attività della Chiesa.

E' un motivo intrinseco che nasce dalla natura stessa della Chiesa, e che le circostanze fanno mettere in evidenza. Nel momento in cui ognuno è obbligato a contribuire alla costruzione di un mondo migliore secondo il proprio « carisma », la Chiesa si presenta come evangelizzatrice, come la banditrice di un messaggio destinato a orientare tutta la vita, e a dare al progresso la direzione giusta.

Ecco, dunque, alcune ragioni che hanno portato così prepotentemente alla ribalta la parola « evangelizzazione », e a indicare con essa la missione stessa della Chiesa nel mondo.

L'evangelizzazione come comunicazione

M. Flick, S. J., Z. Alszeghy, S. J.

Recentemente si è richiamata l'attenzione sul fenomeno della « teologia parlata », cioè di quella fase della riflessione teologica, che non arriva ancora ad essere formulata in opere stampate, ma appare solamente in discussioni orali, e nei resoconti ciclostilati che ne risultano. L'importanza di questa fase del pensiero è notevole [1]. Si tratta infatti di un pensiero ancora non definitivamente maturato, ma che manifesta l'orientamento futuro della scienza teologica ufficiale.

Attualmente abbiamo avuto un saggio di questa « teologia parlata » riguardo l'evangelizzazione, nelle discussioni provocate in tutto il mondo dal foglio di lavoro, trasmesso dalla Segreteria del Sinodo dei Vescovi alle Conferenze Episcopali, in preparazione al sinodo dell'anno 1974, sull'evangelizzazione nel mondo contemporaneo. Il questionario, reso pubblico dalla maggior parte delle Conferenze Episcopali, spesso discusso a fondo da varie organizzazioni, ha dato occasione ad esprimere l'opinione comune nella Chiesa attuale sulla natura dell'evangelizzazione [2].

Il foglio di lavoro suggeriva una interpretazione della parola « evangelizzazione », intesa come « quell'attività, per mezzo della quale viene proclamato e spiegato il Vangelo, è suscitata la fede viva nei non cristiani, ed alimentata nei cristiani (predicazione missionaria, attività catechetica, omiletica, ecc.) ». Ora è significativo che questa descrizione dalla grande maggioranza è stata giudicata insoddisfacente: non parliamo soltanto di quelle pubblicazioni che per partito preso respingevano tutto il « do-

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[1] Per la problematica, cfr. K. Rahner, *Gefahren im heutigen Katholizismus* (Einsiedeln 1950); id., *Das freie Wort in der Kirche* (ibid. 1952).

[2] *L'evangelizzazione nel mondo contemporaneo,* Documento preparatorio al Sinodo 1974, in: Il Regno, Documenti (1 sett. 1973) pp. 390-395.

cumento romano »; anche quelli che cercavano oggettivamente una migliore comprensione della missione evangelizzatrice della Chiesa, hanno espresso riserve in proposito. A parere di molti, l'evangelizzazione non significa soltanto la predicazione del Vangelo, ma abbraccia il dialogo comprensivo e rispettoso, l'esempio dei credenti, l'attività sacramentale, la costruzione delle comunità, ecc., con una parola, tutta l'attività della Chiesa in quanto fa sì che gli uomini diventino discepoli di Cristo.

Queste obbiezioni non rappresentano un'innovazione dal punto di vista operativo, perchè l'attenzione alle disposizioni dell'ascoltatore, la testimonianza personale e comunitaria, la vita sacramentale, la formazione delle nuove Chiese ecc. sono state sempre considerate fattori necessari per la conversione dei non-credenti, rispettivamente per il progresso nella fede dei credenti. Non si tratta però nemmeno di una istanza puramente terminologica. Nella visione dell'evangelizzazione, proposta dal « foglio di lavoro » inviato dalla Segreteria del Sinodo, l'evangelizzazione è presentata come consistente propriamente nella predicazione; le altre attività la preparano o l'accompagnano. Nella concezione della maggioranza di coloro che esprimevano il loro parere, le varie funzioni necessarie per la conversione non sono condizioni o conseguenze, ma costituiscono vari aspetti dello stesso atto di evangelizzazione.

Il rifiuto di identificare l'evangelizzazione con il solo annuncio del Vangelo, è frutto di una più profonda comprensione del mistero dell'evangelizzazione stessa, resa possibile attraverso l'applicazione dei modelli concettuali, elaborati con l'analisi del fenomeno della comunicazione [3].

Dalla metà di questo secolo, due fattori principalmente provocavano una approfondita riflessione sul fenomeno della comunicazione intersoggettiva. L'uno è il disagio molto diffuso per l'incomunicabilità, per l'alienazione e isolamento, tanto più sensibile, quanto più in contrasto con la facilità tecnica della comunicazione, e con la socializzazione progressiva della vita umana [4]. L'altro consiste nella possibilità di produrre, con mezzi

[3] In senso molto generico, comunicazione è « il passaggio di uno o più elementi da un trasmittente ad una ricevitore », oppure, come fenomeno specificamente umano, « una relazione interpersonale che si fonda sulla partecipazione spirituale attiva con altri ».

[4] Cfr. G. Kölbel, *Über die Einsamkeit, Vom Ursprung, Gestaltwandel und Sinn des Einsamkeitserlebnisses* (München 1960).

tecnici, rapporti tra apparecchi, in un certo senso simili a quelli esistenti tra le persone, analogia che dette origine ad una nuova disciplina: la cibernetica [5]. Come conseguenza di questi fatti si svilupparono ricerche convergenti nel campo della matematica [6], della psicologia [7], della sociologia [8], della filosofia [9], ecc., che pur partendo da basi empiriche, subirono anche il condizionamento delle sintesi teoretiche (per non dire delle ideologie) in cui sono stati elaborate, come si può constatare confrontando la descrizione dei fenomeni propri alla comunicazione realizzata nel mondo occidentale e in quello dominato dal marxismo-leninismo [10].

Finora, tali studi in teologia hanno trovato poca risonanza, ed è significativo che, mentre nei dizionari di varie scienze vi sono normalmente articoli abbastanza estesi sulla comunicazione corredati da una abbondante bibliografia [11], nelle enciclopedie teologiche questa voce è praticamente assente [12].

[5] N. Wiener, *Cybernetics* (New York 1948).

[6] P. es. C. E. Shannon, W. Weawer, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana 1949).

[7] P. es. L. Apostel, B. Mandelbrot, A. Morf, *Logique, Language et théorie de l'information* (Paris 1957); R. T. Oliver, D. A. Barbara, *The Healthy Mind in Communion and Communication* (Springfield 1962).

[8] T. Cauter, J. S. Downham, *The Communication of Ideas* (London 1954); P. F. Lazarsfeld, F. N. Santon, *Communication Research* (New York 1949).

[9] Oltre le ricerche fatte sulla reciprocità delle coscienze (M. Nédoncelle), sul rapporto io-tu (M. Buber), sul dialogo (J. Lacroix, F. Rossi-Landi, J. Delesalle), sull'incontro (F. Buytendijk, R. Mehl), e sull'amore (F. Sciacca), esplicitamente analizzano il problema filosofico della comunicazione p. es. *Giornale di metafisica* 5 (1950) n. 1 (con contributi, fra altri, di A. Guzzo, R. Jolivet, R. Le Senne, M. Nédoncelle) e il volume in collaborazione, *Il problema della comunicazione* (Padova 1964).

[10] Cfr. lo studio comparativo di H. Reimann, *Kommunikation*, in: Sowjetsystem und demokratische Gesellschaft, Eine vergleichende Enzyklopedie 3 (Freiburg 1969) 714-731.

[11] P. es., *Enciclopedia delle scienze e della tecnica* 4 (ed. 5 Milano 1970) 162-165; *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* 4 (New York 1957) 78-81; *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* 3 (New York 1968) 24-102; P. Foulquié, *Dictionnaire de la langue pédagogique* (Paris 1971) 84-85; C. F. Graumann, *Interaktion und Kommunication*, in: Handbuch der Psychologie in 12 Bänden 7/2 (Göttingen 1972) 1109-1262.

[12] Fa eccezione il *Lexikon für Theologie un Kirche*, sotto la direzione del Rahner, il quale fin dal « Geist in Welt » (Innsbruck 1939) e più ancora dal « Hörer des Wortes » (München 1941) s'interessò a problemi affini. Notiamo però che la problematica talvolta viene toccata sotto altri vocaboli, piuttosto imprevvisti, come la voce « Anknüpfung » in: *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 1, 392-395.

In questo contesto della storia del pensiero deve essere situata la reazione dell'opinione comune ecclesiale alla definizione proposta dell'evangelizzazione.

La riflessione sociologica-linguistica-filosofica, ha elaborato schemi molto complessi della comunicazione interpersonale, i quali tengono conto di fattori finora poco considerati, come p. es. il modo della comunicazione, i mezzi della comunicazione, i presupposti ontici della comunicazione, l'inserimento della comunicazione nel dinamismo del gruppo, i rapporti tra comunanza, comunicazione e comunione, che approfondiscono e in un certo senso modificano la nostra immagine sul fenomeno della comunicazione. Invece, la maniera usuale di concepire l'evangelizzazione, che si riflette anche nel primo documento preparatorio del Sinodo, è estremamente semplice: vi è una persona che conosce la verità, la trasmette ad altri che non la conoscono. Questo schema rettilineare a senso unico, certamente non è falso, e corrisponde fondamentalmente al significato del termine neotestamentario « euaggelízomai »[13], tanto che l'immagine di una freccia (trasmissione) da un punto (trasmittente) all'altro (ricevitore), deve restare fondamentale nell'ideogramma dell'evangelizzazione. Tuttavia nella descrizione neotestamentaria e nell'esperienza ecclesiale, appaiono con tale costanza altri elementi, che sembra arbitrario considerarli puramente estranei, accidentali. E' chiaro dunque che l'ideogramma fondamentale dell'evangelizzazione deve essere arricchito con altri elementi. Lo studio seguente intende integrare questi elementi in un concetto più completo dell'evangelizzazione, elaborato utilizzando i modelli di comunicazione, scoperti e analizzati da altre scienze.

La comunanza, presupposto per la comunicazione

Comunanza e comunicazione, sul piano empirico

Osservando la trasmissione di segnali per mezzo di strumenti meccanici, si costata come il successo dell'operazione presuppone *una comunanza riccamente strutturata tra trasmittente e ricevitore,* che implica non solo l'esistenza di un « mezzo » materiale, attraverso cui i segnali possono essere trasmessi, l'accordo riguardo un cifrario che determini il significato dei segni usati e una sintonia degli apparecchi, ma anche una consonanza fondamentale delle menti, che riescono a comprendere il messaggio trasmesso e decifrato.

Questa consonanza esige come base anzitutto la fondamentale unità della psiche, per cui il contenuto mentale di una persona è comprensibile per l'altra, in quanto analogo con le proprie esperienze. La ricca fenomenologia studiata nel mondo animale mostra l'importanza e la virtualità dell'elemento « *natura* » nelle comunicazioni[14]. Nella sfera dell'uomo, la funzione della comunanza naturale è tanto più necessaria quanto più la comunicazione trascende il quantitativo (esprimibile per un cifrario arbitrariamente scelto), si addentra nel qualitativo (regno delle intuizioni, dell'analogia e dei simboli) e appella alla vita affettiva.

Nelle comunicazioni umane, è ugualmente importante la comunanza della « *cultura* », manifestantesi sopra tutto nell'esistenza di una comune lingua, o di varie lingue che possono essere reciprocamente tradotte, sia pure in modo imperfetto. Quanto più ci si è resi conto che il linguaggio non consiste soltanto in un sistema di segni fonetici, ma implica anche la comunanza di persuasioni e di apprezzamenti accettati in una società, tanto più appare l'importanza della comunanza del linguaggio-cultura per una comunicazione più profonda di quella che si verifica soltanto a livello di uno scambio di informazioni di indole pratica. I frequenti insuccessi degli sforzi fatti dagli interpreti per soddisfare la curiosità degli esploratori, desiderosi di comprendere cosa significano certe usanze in tribù primitive, mostra quanto sia illusorio il valore delle comunicazioni, che non si basano sulla comunanza culturale.

Finalmente, la comunicazione è tanto più agevole, quanto più esiste tra il trasmittente e ricevente una « *congenialità* » che implica l'appartenenza allo stesso tipo psicologico, l'ana-

[13] Contrariamente all'opinione espressa da G. Friedrich in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* 2 (Stuttgart 1935) 715-718, pensiamo che la parola, sinonima con kerússo, significa annunziare, predicare, portare a conoscenza altrui la lieta novella che Cristo ci salva.

[14] Pensiamo p. es. alle ricerche di Konrad Lorenz sul comportamento degli animali. La parola « natura » è adoperata qui per designare quella zona della vita che precede le prese di posizioni conscie, personali, prescindendo da ogni eventuale implicazione metafisica.

logia dei condizionamenti esterni (cioè delle circostanze ed interessi), e dei condizionamenti interni (la somiglianza delle esperienze e delle disposizioni momentanee) e quanto più si realizza un « *contatto* », la possibilità fisica di aprirsi reciprocamente, che implica non in ultimo luogo la presenza locale dell'uno all'altro.

La necessità di una comunanza per effettuare una comunicazione, è una legge che vale anche per *l'evangelizzazione*. Lo stesso Verbo, comunicandosi all'umanità, « doveva rendersi simile in ogni cosa ai fratelli » [15], e (secondo una analogia sviluppata da F.X. Arnold [16]) l'incarnazione del Verbo è divenuta la legge fondamentale dell'adattamento della sua Parola alle leggi della comunicazione umana. Cristo, volendo perpetuare e diffondere il suo vangelo, non si affida solamente ad un libro, ma ad uomini, scelti come testimoni *connaturali* agli ascoltatori. Questi, nell'eseguire la propria missione, si sentono spinti ad uscire dal condizionamento del proprio ambiente ed a partecipare al mondo *culturale* di coloro ai quali sono mandati [17]. Nella descrizione biblica della predicazione evangelica infatti l'annuncio evangelico non è presentato come una novità assoluta, ma come lo sviluppo (pur inatteso e trascendente) di qualche elemento comune tra l'apostolo e i suoi uditori, continuità questa che evidentemente non esclude la necessità della rottura in quanto la comunanza iniziale dovrà essere trasferita su un livello del tutto nuovo. In questo contesto è sintomatico lo schema della predicazione apostolica, descritto negli Atti: gli apostoli, parlando ai giudei, appellano alla storia d'Israele e alle promesse fatte nell'Alleanza (valore ugualmente ammesso da loro e dagli uditori) [18], mentre quando si rivolgono ai pagani, rilevano altri fattori comuni, come il culto del Dio sconosciuto ad Atene [19] e la dipendenza dalla provvidenza trascendente a Listra [20]. Nè dobbiamo considerare questa sintonia previa come un elemento del tutto estraneo all'evangelizzazione seguente: la Lettera agli Ebrei chiama l'annuncio della Legge e delle promesse in essa contenute già una certa « evangelizzazione » [21], e gli evangelizzatori del mondo ellenistico non di rado attribuiscono ai « filosofi » una funzione di preparazione evangelica, analoga a quella avuta dai profeti dell'Antico Testamento [22].

Parlando dell'« evangelizzatore », la stessa parola suggerisce l'idea di una persona singola, che annuncia il Vangelo. In realtà, il messaggio cristiano è praticamente sempre annunziato da una intera comunità. Anche nel caso estremo, quando un missionario arriva in un paese isolato, egli opera in virtù di una « missione », e anche gli ascoltatori prima o dopo intuiscono dietro lui la comunità che lo ha mandato, che lo sostiene, a cui egli si appoggia e fa appello. Ancora più percettibile è la presenza della comunità ecclesiale, nell'evangelizzazione esercitata nei paesi tradizionalmente cristiani. Perciò la comunanza deve stabilirsi non solo tra due persone, ma tra un ascoltatore e una comunità di credenti, inserita nella Chiesa universale, la quale accoglie la persona da evangelizzare, integrandola in modo provvisorio come catecumeno. Proprio per l'importanza che ha l'aspetto comunitario della comunanza che prepara l'evangelizzazione, il Concilio raccomanda che tutta la comunità sia coinvolta nell'evangelizzazione, « perchè i catecumeni avvertano immediatamente di appartenere al popolo di Dio » [23], ciò che condusse al tentativo di ristabilire istituzionalmente il precatecumenato, il catecumenato, e la mistagogia [24].

Il valore della comunanza iniziale fa comprendere perchè nell'evangelizzazione i « mezzi di comunicazione sociale » (stampa, radio, televisione, ecc.) non possono mai adeguatamente sostituire la parola viva. Infatti, se coloro che parlano, stanno in contatto immediato con gli uditori, si può molto più facilmente realizzare e mettere in evidenza la comunanza, fondamento della comunicazione.

Nel contesto semantico del Concilio Vaticano II, l'importanza della comunanza iniziale per l'evangelizzazione appare so-

15 Eb. 2, 17.

16 Cfr. la nostra esposizione in *Gregorianum* 40 (1959) 698-701.

17 Ricordiamo 1 Cor. 9, 19-22 come esemplificazione del « diventar tutto a tutti » paolino.

18 P. es. *Atti* 7, 2-53; 13, 16-41.

19 *Atti* 17, 23-24.

20 *Atti* 14, 17.

21 *Ebr.* 4, 2. 6.

22 Sull'atteggiamento complesso e talvolta contraddittorio della Chiesa dei Padri di fronte alla cultura antica cfr. la documentazione e la letteratura raccolte da H. Fuchs in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 2, 346-362 e 5, 365-398.

23 *Ad gentes*, n. 14.

24 Cfr. il Direttorio pubblicato dalla S. Congregazione del Culto divino, il 6 gennaio 1972.

pra tutto nell'insistenza sull'*adattamento* della predicazione alle varie culture, alle varie epoche storiche, al grado di sviluppo dei singoli, insistenza che pervade tutto il messaggio conciliare [25].

Comunanza e comunicazione, sul piano della fede

Il punto in cui la problematica della comunanza richiesta per una comunicazione invade il livello della fede, è indicato dalla costatazione di S. Paolo, secondo cui i tessalonicesi ricevendo la sua parola accolsero « non una parola di uomini, ma, come veramente è, una parola di Dio » [26]. Infatti, nell'evangelizzazione si realizza una comunicazione non solo tra il predicatore e l'ascoltatore, ma tra Dio e l'uomo invitato a credere. Questo tipo di comunicazione, presenta una particolare difficoltà. Il Dio nascosto [27] è infinitamente distante dall'uomo [28]; eppure, egli « notifica il mistero della sua volontà secondo il suo beneplacito » [29], cioè apre alla creatura la profondità affettivo-decisionale della sua vita, quella zona dell'esistenza che anche tra gli uomini più difficilmente è accessibile ad altri.

Nello spiegare la possibilità di questa comunicazione, bisogna però anzi tutto ricordare che la creazione è fatta in ordine all'inserimento di tutti gli uomini nel Verbo Incarnato, cioè « verso Cristo » [30]. Quindi non solo ogni uomo è fondamentalmente capace ad essere elevato ad un dialogo con Dio [31], ma anzi, tutta l'esistenza umana è permeata dallo Spirito Santo, che dà luce e forza per comprendere e ad accogliere la chiamata divina. Nella Chiesa Orientale, è stata sempre familiare la concezione, secondo cui l'influsso salutare dello Spirito è costantemente operante nell'universo [32]. La tradizione teologica occidentale per

[25] *Christus Dominus,* n. 17; *Gravissimum educationis,* n. 5; *Apostolicam actuositatem,* Esort. fin.; *Ad gentes,* n. 26; *Presbyterorum ordinis,* n. 22; *Gaudium et spes,* n. 44. 62.

[26] 1 *Tes.* 1, 13.

[27] *Is.* 45, 15.

[28] *DS.* 806.

[29] *Ef.* 1, 9.

[30] Cfr. p es. *Col.* 1, 16. 20.

[31] La teologia classica ha elaborato quest'aspetto della comunanza tra Dio e la creatura, nella categoria della « potentia oboedientialis »: cfr. S. *Th.* 3, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3; 1, q. 115, a. 2, ad 4.

[32] Cfr. le riflessioni patristiche intorno *Sap.* 1, 7, e la sintesi di S. Bulgakov, *Il Paraclito* (trad. dal russo, Bologna 1971) 333-496.

lungo tempo è stata abituata a considerare l'influsso dello Spirito nella categoria di episodiche « grazie attuali » [33], e soltanto negli ultimi decenni si è resa conto che la soprannaturalità dell'influsso dello Spirito non esige ch'esso sia concepito limitato nel tempo e nello spazio [34].

La presenza costante dello Spirito, che inclina l'uomo verso l'unico fine ultimo che nell'economia presente della salvezza è capace di dare un significato definitivo alla sua esistenza, non lascia inalterata la stessa realtà ontologica dell'uomo, in quanto questi non trova la sua perfetta e definitiva « quiete » senza giungere al dialogo filiale con Dio. Proprio qui troviamo il fondamento teologico del famoso « inquietum est cor nostrum » agostiniano [35]. La categoria dell'« esistenziale soprannaturale », elaborata dal Rahner [36], esprime felicemente quest'indole paradossale dell'uomo, che fin dall'inizio della sua esistenza costantemente tende ad un valore, forse non ancora conosciuto categorialmente, che trascende la sua possibilità, e che supera le esigenze della sua « natura » astrattamente considerata.

La comunanza empirica tra l'annunciatore e l'ascoltatore, e la comunanza « creduta » tra Dio e l'uomo, non sono indipendenti, esse si compenetrano nella persona (o meglio, nella comunità) che evangelizza. La predicazione e la testimonianza non sono solo occasioni esterne dell'azione divina, ma strumenti vivi da Dio voluti, benchè non assolutamente indispensabili, per la comunicazione tra Dio e l'uomo. Perciò Cristo, in cui il Padre diventa visibile [37] è il prototipo dell'evangelizzazione, e il ministro della parola tanto più diventa evangelizzatore, quanto più si riveste di Cristo. La vita divina si esprime così, in modo connaturale e congeniale con l'uomo, entrando in contatto con lui, adattandosi perchè possa essere accolta in modo più congeniale. La funzione della congenialità e del contatto nella preparazione

[33] Il concetto, maturato nei commenti di 2 *Sent.* dist. 26, ricevette un'espressione terminologicamente definitiva in Capreolo, *Definitiones theologicae* In 4 *Sent.* dist. 14, q 2, a. 3.

[34] La concezione secondo cui tutta l'esistenza è posta nel campo dinamico dello Spirito sembra ispirare parecchi testi conciliari, p. es. *Lumen gentium,* n. 19; *Ad gentes,* n. 4; *Gaudium et spes,* n. 10. 11.

[35] S. Agostino, *Confessiones* l. 1, c. 1 (PL. 32, 661).

[36] K. Rahner, *Schriften zur Theologie* 1 (Einsiedeln 1954) 339-343; id. 8 (ib. 1967) 359-363.

[37] *Giov.* 14, 9.

alla comunicazione umana, (che pur non essendo assolutamente necessarie hanno un alto valore dispositivo), è analoga con quella della vita teologale posseduta dalla persona o meglio dalla comunità la quale evangelizza, funzione che può essere supplita da Dio, ma ordinariamente promuove l'efficacia della comunicazione divina.

La possibilità della comunicazione tra Dio e l'uomo è fondata dunque in una struttura complessa di fattori, esterni ed interni. Secondo la volontà di Dio, l'uomo deve accogliere la rivelazione del Padre, attraverso il Verbo incarnato, la cui parola è mediata dalla Chiesa; perciò se uno riconoscendo la Chiesa come organo della rivelazione non l'accogliesse, si priverebbe del contatto voluto da Dio. Però, un aumento dell'influsso interno dello Spirito può rendere capace l'uomo, di decifrare il messaggio divino, attraverso una rivelazione così oscura, come la stessa creazione non interpretata dalla parola rivelata. Proprio perciò, le persone ancora non raggiunte dall'annunzio evangelico possono arrivare alla fede, anche se ciò oggettivamente è molto più difficile.

Il Concilio congiunge continuamente queste due affermazioni, asserendo dall'una parte che in senso assoluto la salvezza è possibile anche senza l'incontro con la Chiesa visibile evangelizzatrice [38], e dall'altra parte che tale incontro è un grande beneficio, a cui l'uomo non può impunemente rinunciare, poichè non può assicurarsi quella luce straordinaria con cui Dio supplisce la predicazione esterna [39]. Con altre parole, la Chiesa offre una facilità connaturale per la fede, e perciò la sua accoglienza è una *necessità* [40].

Parlando dell'aspetto ecclesiale della comunione, a cui la comunicazione evangelizzatrice tende, avremo occasione di mo-

[38] *Ad gentes*, n. 7: « Benché quindi Dio, attraverso vie che lui solo conosce possa portare gli uomini che senza loro colpa ignorano il vangelo a quella fede, senza la quale è impossibile piacergli ... ».

[39] *Lumen gentium*, n. 14: « Perciò non possono salvarsi quegli uomini, i quali, pur non ignorando che la Chiesa cattolica è stata da Dio per mezzo di Gesù Cristo fondata come necessaria, non vorranno entrare in essa o in essa perseverare ».

[40] Questa dottrina conciliare non è ancora sufficientemente penetrata nella coscienza dei fedeli tanto che p. es. Mons. Luigi Sartori, Presidente dell'ATI, citando (in modo inesatto) il Questionario del Sinodo che riepilogava la dottrina conciliare, pensa che questa sia « una patente e madornale contraddizione » (*Il Regno attualità*, 15 gennaio 1974, p. 60).

strare, come questa comunanza ecclesiale iniziale, che potremmo chiamare « catecumenale », è destinata a penetrare sempre più profondamente l'esistenza umana.

Comunicazione nell'incontro dialogale

Comunicazione come trasmissione di una dottrina

Le osservazioni fatte riguardo il Questionario in preparazione al Sinodo, hanno messo giustamente in evidenza che la evangelizzazione non può essere ridotta esclusivamente all'annuncio di una dottrina. Esse si distanziano però per lo più con cura dall'altro estremo, che insiste talmente nel valore della comunanza anzi comunione dei cristiani fra sè e con il Cristo (descrivendola come se fosse soltanto una affinità di sentimenti e comportamenti operativi, sociali, politici ecc.) che trascura la comunicazione di asserti ritenuti certi, in cui la comunione deve essere fondata.

Ora, una tale concezione già dal punto di vista empirico è poco convincente. Infatti, ogni comunicazione umana che tende a trascinare altri ad impegnarsi per una causa, specialmente in modo durevole e su scala mondiale non può contare soltanto sul fascino dei capi, ma per produrre un effetto consistente, tende inevitabilmente a legittimare l'impegno facendo comprendere anche il valore della causa, per cui si appella ad impegnarsi.

Ma la necessità della comunicazione di verità risulta ancora più chiaramente dalla natura della realtà cristiana, tutta basata su interventi liberi e irrepetibili di Dio per la salvezza umana [41]. Ora, questi interventi possono costituire la base di una vita comunitaria, in quanto vengono portati per mezzo dell'evangelizzazione a conoscenza di coloro, che sono invitati a vivere secondo essi. L'« hapax » del fatto salvifico [42] entra nell'esistenza cristiana attraverso l'« hapax » della rivelazione [43] e il suo prolungamento che è l'evangelizzazione.

Perciò, la Chiesa fin dall'inizio formulò delle costatazioni, senza cui la stessa vita comunitaria sarebbe « vana », psicologi-

[41] H. Schlier, *Das bleibend Katholische*, ed. 17 Münster 1970.

[42] Cfr. p. es. *Ebr.* 10, 10.

[43] *Giuda* 3.

camente impossibile, e logicamente irragionevole [44]. L'esperienza cristiana, (anche nelle sue forme più entusiastiche, che si manifestano nella vita mistica), parte dal messaggio che assicura l'unità organica di questi asserti, in essi si riconosce, su essi si appoggia, si orienta, e riprende il volo [45].

La spontaneità dell'esperienza esige come suo sostrato, la comunicazione di un messaggio, annunciato e accolto come vero.

La struttura della luce interiore e della realtà esteriore è talmente complessa però, che non è sempre possibile tracciare una linea di demarcazione tra la comunanza e la comunicazione. Nell'incontro tra gli uomini, la stessa insistenza con cui si cerca il contatto con un altro è già una certa comunicazione, che invita alla comunione. Anche in quell'incontro tra Dio e l'uomo in cui nasce la fede, il passaggio tra i rapporti ontici preliminari e la rivelazione stessa, è graduale. Abbiamo già constatato come in certi casi, nella luce dello spirito, la stessa creazione può rivelare il Dio salvatore.

L'ambiguità della distinzione tra comunanza e comunicazione si manifesta nell'uso oscillante della parola « segni dei tempi ». Il Vangelo designa con questo termine fatti che, nella luce « interna » dello Spirito, e in quella « esterna » delle promesse veterotestamentarie, denotano l'avvento del tempo messianico [46]. Nel Concilio invece, il termine significa fatti umani per se ambigui, che possono essere prodotti dallo Spirito che tutto penetra [47], ma possono essere anche conseguenze del peccato, « che stravolge in strumenti di peccato l'operosità umana » [48]. Perciò, i « segni dei tempi », di cui il Concilio parla, secondo lo stesso Concilio devono essere interpretati e giudicati, nella luce del Vangelo [49]. E' dunque un apriorismo ingiustificato, quando senza ulteriore esame si suppone che sono buone tutte le tendenze, le quali dominano in un determinato tempo l'opinione pubblica, anche ecclesiastica [50].

[44] Cfr. il « simbolo di fede » in 1 *Cor.* 15, 3-9, e le considerazioni sul suo valore per l'esistenza cristiana, ibid. 12-19.

[45] Cfr. H. Duméry, *La foi n'est pas un cri* (Tournai 1957) 10-11; id., *Les trois dimensions de l'apostolat moderne* (Paris 1948) 35-70.

[46] *Mt.* 16, 4.

[47] *Gaudium et spes*, n. 11.

[48] *Gaudium et spes*, n. 37.

[49] *Gaudium et spes*, n. 4. 11.

[50] P. es., il movimento delle crociate, o quello della persecuzione delle streghe non possono essere giustificati per il fatto solo della loro diffusione; ciò vale naturalmente anche per le correnti di idee odierne.

Per suscitare e aumentare la fede, è dunque necessario lo annuncio di un messaggio come vero, benchè tale annuncio può essere sostituito da Dio « viis sibi notis » [51], anche se l'annuncio normalmente deve essere congiunto con fatti che lo preparano, lo illustrano e lo confermano [52], e anche se i fatti e l'annuncio possono talmente compenetrarsi che diventino due aspetti della medesima realtà [53].

Comunicazione come dialogo

Il modo di descrivere l'evangelizzazione come la comunicazione di una dottrina già conosciuta ad altri che la ignorano, è stato una delle ragioni per cui (come abbiamo già notato) la definizione dell'evangelizzazione, contenuta nel Questionario preparatorio per il Sinodo, da molti è giudicata incompleta. Infatti la sensibilità attuale sottolinea volontieri l'indole dialogale di *ogni* comunicazione. Facendo comprendere una verità ad altri, il contatto degli spiriti si realizza in due sensi, l'arricchimento è reciproco, e colui che veramente « insegna », nello stesso tempo « impara » qualche cosa.

Lo schema del « docendo discimus » si avvera in modo eminente nell'evangelizzazione.

Ciò si vede già nell'analisi della comunanza iniziale, cioè nell'adattamento, che fu sempre uno dei problemi principali della predicazione missionaria. I termini analogici e simbolici, attraverso i quali esprimiamo il mistero, nei vari contesti culturali, anzi nei vari « giuochi linguistici », hanno significati assai differenti, e le esperienze religiose, a cui facciamo appello, frequentemente sono ambigue; perciò la storia delle missioni è irta di malintesi che soltanto dopo periodi relativamente lunghi potevano essere dissipati. Quindi colui che introduce un altro nella conoscenza della « parola della vita », deve continuamente

[51] *Ad gentes*, n. 7.

[52] Il rapporto fra questi fatti e l'annuncio nell'evangelizzazione può essere concepito analogamente con quello tra eventi e parole nella rivelazione: Cfr. *Dei verbum*, n. 1.

[53] Non entriamo nella problematica della « testimonianza », in cui l'unità dei vari aspetti è particolarmente manifesta, poiché essa fa oggetto di un altro contributo in quest'opera.

sintonizzarsi col modo di ricevere dell'altro, per controllare la propria trasmissione. Questo ascoltare l'eco durante il discorso, in tempi normali sarà spontaneo; in tempi di crisi della comunicazione (e quindi dell'evangelizzazione) come il nostro, esso deve realizzarsi in una riflessione esplicita e conscia, per evitare malintesi e incomprensioni. Ora, non si può tener conto delle categorie, delle certezze, dei dubbi altrui, senza che l'altro manifesti la sua interiorità in qualche modo. Sapendo poi che l'adattamento non è solamente una specie di anticamera per cui si passa per avere la comunicazione, ma una dimensione costante della stessa evangelizzazione, che la compenetra, si comprende che una certa dialogicità è l'orizzonte in cui l'evangelizzazione si svolge dall'inizio alla fine.

La reciprocità dell'informazione, necessaria per intendersi tra il catecheta e il catecumeno, non è che un aspetto (e forse il meno importante) della dialogicità dell'evangelizzazione. Oltre quest'aspetto « didattico », dobbiamo ricordare anche il suo aspetto « evolutivo ».

Il mistero della salvezza trascende ogni concetto umano, e perciò non può essere esaurito da nessuna spiegazione teologica. « La Chiesa nel corso dei secoli tende incessantemente alla pienezza della verità divina, finchè in essa vengano a compimento le parole di Dio » [54]. Ora, « la comprensione tanto delle cose quanto delle parole trasmesse » cresce sopra tutto in quanto la comunità deve esprimere le ragioni della sua esistenza in nuove forme di pensiero, e deve rispondere, in base alla fede, a problemi, che nei documenti originali, per cui la fede è stata trasmessa, non sono stati esplicitamente previsti. Tale approfondimento, si realizza già per lo sviluppo storico della stessa comunità originale, che attraverso i tempi è sottomessa a diversi condizionamenti, esterni ed interni. Ma più manifesto è l'approfondimento che si realizza, quando la comunità è costretta ad esprimere la sua fede in mentalità e tradizioni culturali diverse da quelle, di cui Dio si è servito per comunicarci il suo messaggio. In questo caso, dal confronto dialogale risulta inevitabilmente una nuova, più profonda comprensione del mistero annunciato, anche nel caso in cui la nuova matrice culturale è meno sviluppata, poichè si comprende meglio una verità tra-

[54] *Dei verbum*, n. 8.

scendentale, quando se ne vedono vari aspetti attraverso diverse concettualizzazioni possibili. In questo modo la stessa comunità si arricchisce, mentre diffonde il « deposito » a lei affidato.

La storia offre vari esempi di un tale dialogo evolutivo. Il dogma cristologico calcedonese non sarebbe stato pensabile senza un incontro del giudeo-cristianesimo con la cultura ellenistica. Le teorie più diffuse sulla redenzione, sono debitrici al modo in cui i popoli germanici amministravano la giustizia. La teologia medievale dell'amore puro poteva svilupparsi solamente nella civiltà celtica delle due Britannie. La teologia recente del progresso e della liberazione è stata prodotta, in quanto i popoli del terzo mondo cominciavano leggere il Vangelo, nella prospettiva della propria situazione.

E' da notare che un tale dialogo « evolutivo » si ha fin dal primo incontro del vangelo con una civiltà ancora non evangelizzata; tuttavia esso si approfondisce, quando in una civiltà il cristianesimo passa dall'acculturazione ad una più profonda inculturazione.

Vi è in fine una terza forma della dialogicità dell'evangelizzazione, che riguarda non solo la *comunicazione* o anche la *comprensione* del messaggio, ma la stessa *esistenza cristiana* della persona o della comunità, che annuncia e testimonia la fede.

Quando S. Paolo dichiara di essere il padre dei fedeli di Corinto avendoli generati in Cristo [55], la sua affermazione non si riferisce solo al fatto storico di essere stato il primo evangelizzatore di quella comunità, ma constata anche una correlatività nel modo di vivere l'esistenza cristiana, da parte di S. Paolo e da quella dei corinti, che consiste nel fatto che mentre l'apostolo assume il ruolo di padre nello spirito, i fedeli da parte loro accettano il ruolo di figli. I due ruoli sono evidentemente dialogalmente correlativi. Uno di essi si realizza solo quando la persona a cui si riferisce assume un atteggiamento corrispondente. Comprendiamo così che l'esistenza cristiana non è uno sfondo immutabile, indifferentemente suscettibile a qualsiasi ruolo, ma viene profondamente modificata per la sua realizzazione concreta dialogale. L'esistenza personale è un impegno libero verso valori e persone: come la divina natura può sussistere solo nella dialettica delle processioni divine, così la per-

[55] 1 *Cor.* 4, 15.

fezione umana e specialmente cristiana, che ha il suo prototipo nella vita trinitaria, è costituita e specificata dalle varie speci di apertura verso altri.

In questa prospettiva si colloca l'espressione paolina, « guai a me, se non evangelizzerò » [56]. Secondo la vocazione personale dell'Apostolo, egli può crescere verso la pienezza di Cristo solo nella linea della paternità spirituale, e questo implica il rapporto dialogico tra l'evangelizzatore e i suoi figli spirituali.

L'indole esistenzialmente dialogale dell'evangelizzazione appare anche nelle formule linguistiche adoperate dai testi neotestamentari riferentisi ad essa. Ogni parlare umano ha tre dimensioni: esso constata la realtà, esprime l'interiorità di chi parla, e crea una nuova situazione tra gli interlocutori. Il carattere specifico di una locuzione dipende sopra tutto dall'accentuazione prevalente dell'uno o dell'altro aspetto. Nell'evangelizzazione, certamente non può mancare l'elemento constatativo (altrimenti l'evangelizzazione non trasmetterebbe una dottrina). Prevale però l'elemento « creativo », che appella all'accoglienza da parte degli uditori. L'unione delle due dimensioni è espressa nella struttura linguistica dei discorsi di Cristo e degli Apostoli, in cui per lo più una frase posta in indicativo è seguita da un'altra imperativa. La formula « il tempo è compiuto, e il regno di Dio è vicino: convertitevi e credete al vangelo » [57], può essere considerata un paradigma tipico, in quanto la constatazione serve come fondamento ad un invito di accettare Cristo come Signore e Salvatore. Per l'evangelizzazione l'apostolo presenta Cristo come maestro e così trasforma gli ascoltatori in discepoli [58], li rende imitatori suoi e di Cristo [59].

Constatando l'indole dinamica dell'evangelizzazione che provoca nell'apostolo e nell'uditore ruoli correlativi, siamo arrivati alla soglia della terza constatazione di questa riflessione: l'evangelizzazione è una comunicazione, che segna il passaggio dalla comunanza alla comunione.

[56] 1 *Cor.* 9, 16.
[57] *Mt.* 1, 15.
[58] *Mt.* 28, 19.
[59] 1 Tes. 1, 5-6; Gal. 4, 12.

Comunicazione sorgente di comunione

Aspetto comunionale dell'evangelizzazione

Comunanza e comunione, sono termini affini, poichè tutti e due esprimono una certa unità tra varie persone. La differenza sta nel modo in cui l'unità compenetra e determina la pluralità.

La comunanza può precedere ogni presa di posizione personale, resta sul livello « ontico », e può esistere anche tra gli oggetti (che sono simili tra se, che stanno in rapporti dinamici reciproci di attrazione, che formano insieme una struttura, ecc.). La comunione invece è frutto di un impegno consapevole e libero, cioè si pone sul livello « esistentivo », e perciò si ha solamente tra persone (che si conoscono, si accettano come amici, ecc.). La comunanza appartiene all'ordine statico, e basta costatarla; la comunione è una realtà dinamica, è frutto di una donazione reciproca, e permane solo in quanto la mutua fedeltà prolunga creativamente l'autodonazione. La comunanza non implica necessariamente che un soggetto si rivolga ad un altro e può essere descritta adoperando la terza persona (« lui sta vicino a me »); per vivere in comunione, è indispensabile che una persona « incontri » un'altra, interpellandola come « tu! ». La comunanza resta alla superficie della personalità, e sufficiente che vari soggetti « abbiano » qualche elemento in comune; nella comunione, i vari soggetti « sono » riuniti in un « grande-io » collettivo liberamente accettato, e si sentono quindi « noi » [60].

Una vera comunicazione personale conduce di per sè verso una comunione. Infatti vi sono comunicazioni tra persone che non sono personali, perchè si svolgono in un modo che sarebbe possibile anche tra oggetti. Se un turista si rivolge al portiere dell'albergo, domandando quale autobus conduce ad un determinato punto della città, l'informazione potrebbe essere ricevuta anche da un disco o da una guida stampata; la persona sostituisce solo la macchina troppo costosa o il libro difficile a consultarsi. Mi rivolgo ad una persona come a persona, quando

[60] La distinzione qui esposta tra comunanza e comunione è ispirata dalla filosofia di G. Marcel (cfr. p. es. R. Troisfontaines, *De l'existence à l'être La philosophie de Gabriel Marcel*, 2, Namur 1953, 16-21) e di M. Buber (cfr. p. es. A. Anzenbacher, *Die Philosophie Martin Bubers*, Wien 1965.)

voglio conoscere non solo una realtà oggettiva, ma il suo io soggettivo, ciò che egli pensa e sente, e quando desidero comunicargli le mie impressioni e apprezzamenti. La comunicazione non-personale che si serve dell'altro, riconferma l'isolamento dei due, e in un certo senso aliena quello a cui ci si rivolge; la comunicazione personale supera l'isolamento e perciò inizia una comunione. Quanto più la comunicazione si avvicina al centro della personalità, tanto più la comunione che ne risulta è più intensa: un incontro su basi ideologiche lascia legami più profondi di un altro che si riferisce solo a comuni interessi ricreativi.

Per comprendere il mistero dell'evangelizzazione, bisogna renderci conto che il termine, a cui essa tende, è la comunione soprannaturale tra l'apostolo e gli ascoltatori, divenuta possibile in quanto l'uno e gli altri entrano in comunione con il Padre, per Cristo, nello Spirito. « Quello che era dal principio, dice S. Giovanni, quel che abbiamo udito e abbiamo veduto con gli occhi nostri, quello che contemplammo e le nostre mani palparono del verbo di vita ... Quel che abbiamo veduto e udito l'annunziamo anche a voi, perchè anche voi abbiate comunione con noi. La comunione nostra è con il Padre, e con il Figlio suo Gesù Cristo »[61]. Questa comunione è realizzata dallo Spirito, che fa partecipare il credente alla relazione filiale di Cristo con il Padre: infatti, secondo la densa espressione di S. Paolo, il Padre mandò nei nostri cuori lo Spirito del Figlio, « che grida, Abba, Padre »[62], e con ciò unisce in una comunione superiore tutti i credenti[63].

Dobbiamo però ricordare che la comunione, realizzata nell'evangelizzazione, differisce da tutte le altre comunioni personali perchè non è solo personale, ma invade anche la sfera ontica della «natura », trasformando in modo essenziale la comunanza iniziale esistente tra Dio, il predicatore, e gli uditori. La parabola giovannea della vite e dei tralci[64], la dottrina petrina della partecipazione alla divina natura[65] ecc. mostrano che la comunione del credente con la SS. Trinità va oltre la piena consonanza dei pensieri degli affetti e delle decisioni.

[61] 1 *Gio.* 1, 1-3.
[62] *Gal.* 4, 5.
[63] Cfr. *Ef.* 4, 4-7; ib. 2, 14.
[64] *Gio.* 15, 1-8.
[65] 2 *Piet.* 1, 3-7.

Questa comunione, vissuta con il Padre per il Figlio nello Spirito, traboccante nell'accoglienza di tutti i fratelli di Cristo, è la « vita », insieme ontologica e esistentiva, che è fine connaturale di tutta l'evangelizzazione. Come S. Giovanni conclude il suo vangelo, « queste cose sono state scritte, affinchè crediate, che Gesù è il Cristo, il figlio di Dio, e affinchè credendo abbiate la vita nel suo nome[66].

In questa terra, la comunione-vita non è mai compiuta, non solo perchè resta sempre indebolita dal peccato che abita in noi[67], ma anche perchè, come ogni vita, è una realtà evolutiva, lanciata verso una sempre più piena unione con Dio, e perciò di sua natura destinata a crescere[68].

L'evangelizzazione dunque non diventa mai superflua, ma deve accompagnare il cristiano per tutta la vita, perchè la comunione-vita si realizzi in modo sempre più abbondante[69].

L'aspetto ecclesiale dell'evangelizzazione

L'evangelizzazione è un'attività personale, ma non individuale. Essa (come abbiamo già notato) presuppone una comunanza iniziale con la Chiesa, che abbiamo chiamato « catecumenale »; si svolge come una comunicazione di cui lo strumento umano è la Chiesa; e conduce ad una comunione delle persone con la Chiesa, per cui la Chiesa stessa viene progressivamente costruita.

Quest'affermazione, espressa con una certa forza nel Questionario preparatorio al Sinodo[70], ha suscitato commenti sfavorevoli[71]. La spiegazione della reazione negativa si trova nell'ecclesiologia di questi autori. Bisogna perciò sviluppare l'insegnamento cattolico sull'aspetto ecclesiale dell'evangelizzazione, indicando in che senso adoperiamo in questo contesto il termine « Chiesa ».

Secondo il Concilio Vaticano II, « Cristo, unico mediatore, ha costituito sulla terra e incessantemente sostenuta la sua Chie-

[66] *Gio.* 20, 30.
[67] Cfr. 1 *Gio.* 1, 8-9.
[68] Cfr. *Col.* 2, 19; Ef. 4, 15-16.
[69] Cfr. *Gio.* 10, 10.
[70] *L'evangelizzazione del mondo contemporaneo*, Parte II, I, C (Il Regno Documenti, 1 settembre 1973, p. 392.)
[71] Un esempio caratteristico è la critica di Pierre Lucier, S. I., in *Relations*, dicembre 1973, pp. 340-343, in cui il lettore viene invitato « de ne pas être captif d'une cohérence institutionelle en décadence ».

sa santa, comunità di fede, di speranza e di carità, quale organismo visibile, attraverso il quale diffonde su tutti la verità e la grazia »[72]. In questa descrizione della Chiesa è importante notare come il Concilio respinge la separazione tra la società costituita da organismi gerarchici, e il corpo mistico di Cristo, tra comunità visibile e quella spirituale, tra la Chiesa terrestre e la Chiesa ormai in possesso dei beni celesti: infatti, secondo il Concilio, questi elementi « non devono essere considerati come due cose diverse, ma formano una sola complessa realtà, risultante di un duplice elemento, umano e divino »[73]. Il Concilio illustra la sua affermazione, ricorrendo all'analogia con il mistero del Verbo Incarnato: « Infatti, come la natura assunta serve al Verbo divino da vivo organo di salvezza a Lui indissolubilmente unita, in modo non dissimile l'organismo sociale della Chiesa serve allo Spirito di Cristo che la vivifica, per la crescita del Corpo »[74].

Stando a quest'insegnamento, non è ammissibile opporre il movimento spirituale spontaneo del cristianesimo all'istituzione che irrigidirebbe il rito e la dottrina a danno del dinamismo spirituale: l'istituzione è, nella sua validità oggettiva, necessario sostrato e fermento della spinta spirituale. Da questo principio, seguono due conseguenze, esplicitamente affermate dal Concilio.

La prima è che la sincera accoglienza della comunione con Cristo, per sua interna esigenza, postula l'accettazione della comunione voluta da Cristo con i suoi discepoli, che aderiscono al Padre per Cristo nella fede, nella speranza e nella carità, comunione che s'incarna di fatto nella Chiesa istituzionale. Una vera conversione non conduce a Cristo, senza condurre dunque necessariamente alla Chiesa, è l'evangelizzazione di sua natura tende alla Chiesa, e fa sì che il credente, con il cuore e con il corpo, s'integri nella Chiesa. Questa dottrina, formulata dal Concilio con tutte le sfumature e cautele necessarie[75], naturalmente non esclude nè che possa esistere una comunione con Cristo senza inserimento nella Chiesa visibile, dove questa è incolpevolmente ignorata, nè che possano esistere persone integrate

[72] *Lumen gentium*, n. 8.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] *Lumen gentium*, n. 14.

nella Chiesa visibile, che hanno perduto per il peccato la comunione vissuta con Cristo; perciò la Chiesa, popolo peregrinante, ha bisogno sempre di rinnovare se stessa[76], sia nelle persone sia nelle strutture istituzionali.

La seconda conseguenza è che la Chiesa, insieme istituzionale e spirituale, opera attivamente la comunione con Cristo. Quest'attività ha due aspetti: la diffusione della « verità », e quella della « grazia », per sottolineare le due parole-chiavi adoperate nel testo citato[77]. Il primo aspetto, la mediazione della verità, appare più chiaramente nella « predicazione », benchè l'annuncio del vangelo non ha solo l'efficacia naturale della parola, ma dà anche la grazia, in quanto Dio opera nei cuori di coloro che ascoltano la sua parola[78]. Il secondo aspetto è maggiormente accentuato nel « sacramento »; è da notare tuttavia che il rito sacramentale è anche « una ricca fonte di istruzione per il popolo fedele »[79]. Si può dire che tanto il modello della « predicazione » quanto quello del « sacramento » possono essere applicati a tutta l'esistenza ecclesiale: il primo, perchè tutta la realtà della Chiesa è un « segno elevato tra le nazioni » che esprime il messaggio di Cristo e gli fa testimonianza[80], il secondo perchè tutta la vita della Chiesa è fonte di grazia, cioè « universale sacramento della salvezza »[81].

La struttura propria dell'evangelizzazione

Con queste precisazioni, siamo arrivati a riconoscere in *tutta* l'attività e anzi in *tutta* l'esistenza della Chiesa l'indole di una evangelizzazione, poichè tutta la realtà e la vita della Chiesa tende efficacemente a suscitare e aumentare la fede, è una *comunicazione* comunitaria continua, che fa passare i membri da una *comunanza* iniziale « catecumenale », ad una sempre più perfetta *comunione*, in cui le persone vivono sempre più in virtù dello Spirito Santo, anima della Chiesa[82].

[76] *Lumen gentium*, n. 9.
[77] *Lumen gentium*, n. 8.
[78] Su questo tema, caro alla recente teologia della predicazione, cfr. D. Grasso, *Annuncio della salvezza* (Napoli 1975) 255-290.
[79] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 33.
[80] Cfr. *DS.* 3014.
[81] Cfr. *Lumen gentium*, n. 9; *Ad gentes*, n. 5; *Gaudium et spes*, n. 45.
[82] Cfr. *Lumen gentium*, n. 7.

Apparentemente, l'estensione del significato della parola « evangelizzazione » a tutta l'esistenza ecclesiale, svuota il termine del suo contenuto: infatti, secondo la regola logica antica, la comprensione di un concetto è inversamente proporzionata alla sua estensione. In verità, mostrando che il termine evangelizzazione designa una dimensione costante di tutta la vita teologale della Chiesa, si comprende meglio la natura propria anche della stessa predicazione, e di quella singolare comunicazione che costituisce l'essenza dell'evangelizzazione.

Infatti, se l'evangelizzazione fosse solamente una specie di propaganda per la verità e per il valore del sistema dottrinale, normativo e istituzionale del cristianesimo, un simile uso linguistico sarebbe assurdo. Nella propaganda politica o commerciale, l'obiettivo della pubblicità è provocare una esigenza, e offrire una informazione, per cui il pubblico si decida di comprare il prodotto o di dare il voto al partito. Perciò non ha senso dire che si fa propaganda senza appellare al pensiero o alla deliberazione altrui con parole, con scritti o con immagini. Nell'evangelizzazione, non si raccomandano soltanto dottrine, regole di condotta o istituzioni, ma tutto tende a realizzare un incontro con Gesù Cristo, morto e risuscitato. L'oggetto proprio dell'annuncio evangelico non sono semplici asserti, ma Cristo, il quale viene proclamato come presente e salvatore [83]. Se si insiste su un asserto, ciò succede perchè attraverso esso diventa più percettibile la persona viva [84]. La struttura dell'evangelizzazione, centrata sulla persona viva di Cristo, appare chiara nella conclusione di Matteo: « Mi è stato dato ogni potere ... Andate dunque e fate miei discepoli ... battezzandoli ... insegnando loro ... ed ecco io sono con voi ... » [85]. Tutta l'opera affidata agli apostoli si basa sulla presenza potente e viva di Cristo, perciò la frase comincia e termina con la costatazione di questo sfondo essenziale dell'evangelizzazione. In virtù di questa presenza, gli apostoli sono mandati, non semplicemente a suscitare pensieri e apprezzamenti riguardo la figura (storica) di Gesù, ma a realizzare il rapporto interpersonale di discepolato tra gli ascoltatori con il Cristo (vivo), ciò che succede, sia attraverso il sacramento, sia attraverso l'annuncio.

[83] Cfr. p. es. *Atti* 8, 5; ib. 19, 13; 1 *Cor.* 1, 23; 2 *Cor.* 4, 5; ib. 11, 4; *Fil.* 1, 15; ecc.

[84] Cfr. la formula significativa di 1 *Cor.* 15, 12.

[85] *Mt.* 28, 18-20.

Evangelizzazione come « causalità personale »

Dalla descrizione dell'evangelizzazione, quale emerge dalle pagine precedenti, risulta che la sua struttura è assai complessa. Evangelizzare, implica anzi tutto la realizzazione di una comunanza iniziale, che permette la comunicazione (preevangelizzazione); implica un influsso per cui l'ascoltatore non solo diventa capace di comprendere e apprezzare la parola, ma di fatto viene attratto dal Padre (mediazione della grazia); implica la manifestazione di valori, espressi quasi trasparentemente nella stessa esistenza dell'evangelizzazione (testimonianza); implica la trasmissione progressiva e dialogale di persuasioni e apprezzamenti (annuncio del messaggio); e sopra tutto implica una relazione intima che si realizza non solo e non principalmente tra l'uditore e l'evangelizzatore, ma più ancora tra l'ascoltatore e il Padre, per Cristo, nello Spirito.

La complessità di questo influsso potrebbe indurre il teologo a spiegare l'evangelizzazione, come una molteplicità di azioni, convergenti ma eterogenee. E' comprensibile che la tradizione teologica abbia ceduto a questa tentazione, tanto più perchè le categorie classiche della causalità, appartenenti all'eredità aristotelica, offrivano varie piste per classificare diversi aspetti del ministero ecclesiale con cui si suscita e aumenta la fede. Nella giustificazione avvenuta in seguito alla predicazione e al battesimo, si poteva distinguere la causalità morale del predicatore che con argomentazioni, consigli e ammonimenti sollecita il cuore; la causalità efficiente principale di Dio, che infonde le grazie attuali e poi quella abituale; la causalità efficiente strumentale dell'umanità di Cristo, dei sacramenti, della predicazione nella stessa mediazione della grazia; la causalità quasi-formale dello Spirito Santo, unito alla Chiesa come sua anima; la causalità materiale delle disposizioni liberamente accolte dall'uomo; la causalità esemplare di Cristo; la causalità finale della gloria, voluta da Dio, a cui l'uomo si converte ...

Tutta questa costruzione non è falsa; anzi in casi limiti, un elemento può realizzarsi senza gli altri (pensiamo, p. es. al

battesimo dei bambini, alla giustificazione del catecumeno, o ai così detti « cristiani anonimi »). Ciò non ostante, il sistema che abbiamo ricordato, ha una grave deficienza, in quanto non mette in rilievo l'unità dei vari elementi, e non fa comprendere, qual'è la loro strutturazione. Sopra tutto, l'analisi scolastica non spiega sufficientemente la differenza profondissima che esiste tra il dinamismo dell'evangelizzazione, e quello di un processo causale fisico, realizzantesi tra gli oggetti inanimati, da cui le categorie causali aristoteliche traggono la loro origine [86].

Possiamo correggere l'insufficienza di una descrizione troppo « fisicista » dell'efficacia propria all'evangelizzazione, considerando l'evangelizzazione nel contesto di un fenomeno caratteristico, i cui esempi frequentemente incontriamo nella storia.

Succede spesso che forti personalità esercitano un fascino sugli altri, creando spontaneamente attorno a sè un gruppo di discepoli, pronti a condividerne gli ideali, a « seguirli » in tutta l'ampiezza del termine, a sacrificarsi per la causa che vedono in qualche modo incarnata nel capo. Si tratta di un« archetipo », profondamente radicato nella realtà umana. Una sua formulazione classica, la troviamo nei due personaggi immortali ideati dal Cervantes, Don Chisciotte e Sancio Pancia, di cui il primo riesce a trascinare il secondo nella sua avventura assurda e anacronistica. Ma il paradigma si realizza spesso anche nella storia: pensiamo al rapporto tra Alessandro Magno e i suoi generali, Carlo Magno e i suoi paladini, S. Francesco e i primi compagni, Garibaldi e i suoi fedelissimi, Lenin e il gruppo intransigente radunatosi intorno a lui durante l'esilio, ecc. Come appare dagli esempi citati, ci si può servire di questo fascino, per il bene e per il male, per migliorare l'umanità o per peggiorarla. Però è comune a tutti i personaggi che abbiamo ricordato che essi non hanno agito sugli altri solo con argomentazioni, promesse o minaccie, ma con qualche cosa di più, distinto da tutto il resto, che noi, non sapendolo esprimere meglio, chiamiamo fascino personale, azione diretta della persona sulla persona, e che la teologia contemporanea tenta di descrivere con la categoria della « causalità personale » [87].

[86] Un sintomo caratteristico della tendenza di superare la « cosificazione » del concetto della grazia, è la rivalutazione della sua indole pneumatologica e cristologica; cfr. p. es. P. Emery, *Le Christ, notre récompense* (Neuchâtel 1962) 91.

[87] H. Mühlen, *Der Heilige Geist als Person in der Trinität, bei der Inkarnation, und im Gnadenbund: Ich-Du-Wir* (ed. 2 Münster 1967); *Una persona mystica* (ed. 2 Paderborn 1967); M. Flick, *La causalità personale di Cristo*: Rassegna di Teologia 6 (1974) 426-434.

In questa causalità è caratteristico che non soltanto una azione provoca qualche effetto o reazione, ma la totalità di una persona modifica la figura totale dell'altra, facendo sorgere in essa nuove qualità, inclinazioni, aspirazioni, che non esistevano affatto, o rimanevano latenti. Tale influsso può arrivare ad un grado di intensità, che supera le resistenze del « senso comune », neutralizza le norme con cui l'ambiente ragiona e misura le cose, anzi fino al caso-limite del « plagio » [88]. L'influsso della causalità personale può essere descritto con quelle categorie ellenistiche, con cui la letteratura sapienziale ha cercato di esprimere i rapporti tra Jahvé e la Sapienza: questa è emanazione, effluvio, riflesso, specchio, immagine [89]. Infatti, come queste metafore mostrano, colui che « agisce » determina il modo di esistere di colui che « subisce », provocando in lui atteggiamenti e comportamenti che sono correlativi ai suoi propri, e altri che sono invece ad essi paralleli: il primo caso si esprime con la categoria dell'« impronta », il secondo con quella dell'« immagine ». La psicologia dei ruoli [90] ha elaborato il meccanismo di questo influsso, per cui, p. es., uno che si impone come capo, fa sì che l'altro accetti nei suoi riguardi il ruolo di gregario, e cerchi di esercitare il ruolo di capo riguardo ad altri. E' caratteristico in quest'influsso che esso realizza insieme, come una unità, tutte le speci della causalità conosciute nel mondo fisico, ma in una maniera superiore, possibile solo sul livello della vita personale, che implica la « comprensione » di un altro.

Utilizzando la categoria della causalità personale, si comprende meglio il senso della missione evangelizzatrice come missione per fare discepoli di Cristo [91].

Gli Atti degli Apostoli, raccontando il risultato dell'evangelizzazione di Barnaba e di Paolo, concludono: « Così avvenne che per la prima volta in Antiochia i discepoli furono chiamati

[88] In questo contesto sono assai istruttive le analisi di Giovanni Maria Flick, *La tutela della personalità nel delitto di plagio* (Milano 1972) 77-126.

[89] *Sap.* 7, 25.

[90] Cfr. A. M. Rocherblave-Spenle, *La nation de rôle en psychologie sociale* (Paris 1962); H. Sunden, *Die Religion und die Rollen* (Berlin 1966).

[91] *Mt.* 28, 18-20.

cristiani »[92]. Per noi, abituati all'appellativo « cristiani », la frase ha maggiore importanza, se l'invertiamo: originalmente i cristiani furono chiamati discepoli. Tale appellativo fu applicato non solo a quelli che seguivano Gesù nella sua vita terrestre, ma anche a quelli che si inserivano nella comunità dei credenti[93], caratterizzata per l'accoglienza dell'insegnamento apostolico, e per la partecipazione allo spezzamento del Pane e alla preghiera[94]. Infatti quando i credenti, ascoltando il racconto dei fatti e delle parole di Gesù, sentivano la parola « discepoli », pensavano già anche a se stessi[95].

E' da notare che il rapporto tra maestro e discepolo, nell'ambiente della comunità apostolica, non era (come oggi) un rapporto puramente professionale, ma implicava una relazione molto più personale. Il discepolo viveva con il suo maestro in una comunanza di vita[96], gli prestava servizi personali[97], condivideva il suo destino[98], assimilava i suoi insegnamenti[99] e comportamenti[100] e prolungava il suo influsso verso la posterità[101]. La dipendenza dal maestro, che imponeva al discepolo sacrifici assai sensibili[102], creava una singolare comunione tra il maestro e il discepolo, che poteva essere detta una paternità spirituale[103]. E' noto quanta importanza aveva questo fenomeno, fin dall'inizio nell'esperienza cristiana[104].

Si diventa veramente cristiano, subendo la causalità personale di Cristo, il quale, rivelando il suo ruolo di Maestro e Signore[105], provoca nell'uomo la libera accoglienza del ruolo di discepolo. Ciò implica che l'uomo, abbandonando tutto, « segue » Cristo[106], che egli credendo riconosce Cristo suo Signore e suo

92 *Atti* 11,26.
93 Cfr. *Atti* 6,1.
94 Cfr. *Atti* 2,42.
95 Possiamo seguire le tappe dell'estensione del significato del termine, paragonando *Mt.* 16,14 *Mc.* 8,34 e *Lc* 9,23.
96 Cfr. *Mc.* 3,14; *Gio.* 12,26.
97 *Mt.* 26,17-19.
98 *Mt.* 10,24-27; *Lc.* 6,40.
99 *Gio.* 8,31.
100 *Gio.* 13,35; ib. 15,8.
101 *Atti* 1,8.
102 *Lc.* 9,23-27.
103 *Mc.* 10,24; *Gio.* 13,33; *Gal.* 4,19.
104 A. Schulz, *Nachfolgen und Nachahmen* (München 1962); Th. Aerts, *Suivre Jésus*, in: *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 42 (1966) 476-512.
105 *Gio.* 13,13.
106 *Mt.* 4,18-20.

Dio[107], e che, « avvolto nello splendore di questa grande luce », si mette completamente a disposizione di Cristo: « Che devo fare, o Signore? »[108]. La risposta a questa domanda è che il discepolo deve « indossare il Cristo »[109], (partecipando alla sua vita interiore[110], adottando i suoi comportamenti[111]), e deve entrare nel « ruolo » cioè nella struttura di relazioni interpersonali, per cui Cristo è figlio del Padre[112], servitore del prossimo[113], fino al pieno spogliamento di sè[114]. Ciò significa prolungare il ruolo di Cristo, Maestro e Redentore, nel tempo e nello spazio, con l'insegnamento[115], con la testimonianza[116], e con la sofferenza redentrice[117].

E' chiaro che diventare discepoli di Cristo, era sempre un avvenimento miracoloso, non solo per l'efficacia fulminea delle chiamate del Maestro, ma anche per la profonda radicalità del cambiamento che la sua sequela implicava, paragonata con una nuova nascita, possibile solo in quanto operato dallo Spirito Santo[118]. Ma assolutamente non si poteva aspettare che la serie di tali adesioni potesse prolungarsi e anzi moltiplicarsi dopo la scomparsa del Maestro[119], e ch'egli, non più veduto e ascoltato, potesse ancora esercitare il suo fascino[120]. Senza dubbio, la figura di Gesù appare attraente, anche attraverso le pagine del vangelo; ma si diventa sensibile a subire l'attrattiva della sua causalità personale, in quanto s'incontra lo splendore della sua personalità nella Chiesa, la quale ripete, adatta e sviluppa il messaggio di Cristo nella sua predicazione, fa sperimentare il valore della sequela di Cristo nella sua testimonianza, e sopra tutto irradia lo Spirito Santo, come sacramento primordiale e

107 2 *Gio.* 20,28.
108 *Atti* 22,6-10.
109 *Rom.* 13,14.
110 *Fil.* 2,5.
111 1 *Gio.* 2,6.
112 *Mt.* 5,45.
113 *Gio.* 14,14-15.
114 1 *Cor.* 10,33 - 11,1; *Rom.* 15,3; ib. 7; 2 *Cor.* 8,9; *Ef.* 15,1-2; *Col.* 3,10-13; 1 *Gio.* 3,16.
115 *Mt.* 16,15.
116 2 *Cor.* 2,15.
117 *Col.* 1,24.
118 *Gio.* 3,5.
119 *Atti* 6,38.
120 1 *Piet.* 1,8-9.

distributrice dei sacramenti, specialmente nell'eucaristia, « fonte e culmine di tutta l'evangelizzazione » [121].

Proprio nella prospettiva della causalità personale ritroviamo l'unità fondamentale di tutti questi influssi, che non sono altro che diverse maniere, attraverso cui l'unica causalità personale di Cristo raggiunge anche oggi l'umanità.

* * *

Con questa costatazione, abbiamo raggiunto l'obiettivo della nostra ricerca, che era una descrizione dell'evangelizzazione nella categoria della comunicazione, più conforme con la rivelazione, e con la stessa esperienza ecclesiale.

Conserviamo il diagramma fondamentale della comunicazione evangelizzatrice, rappresentata da una freccia che passa da un punto all'altro. Ma abbiamo specificato anzi tutto, che il « trasmittente » è Cristo, il quale non comunica agli altri solamente qualche notizia o qualche direttiva, ma offre la sua viva realtà, appellando come a risposta all'accoglienza in una comunione viva, destinata a progredire.

Questa comunicazione fondamentale si realizza nel multiforme ministero ecclesiale, suo organo, il quale, nella tensione dialogale tra il Vangelo e l'ascoltatore, non sostituisce affatto l'incontro diretto e immediato con Cristo, ma crea l'ambiente adatto, il « luogo » in cui l'incontro possa realizzarsi, conformemente con il dinamismo proprio dello spirito umano.

Così si comprende che l'evangelizzazione non significa *solo* l'annuncio di una verità (significa *anche* questo), ma si riferisce ad un insieme strutturato di attività umane, per cui tutti sono attratti da Cristo a « vivere in intima comunione e familiarità con il Padre, per mezzo del suo Figlio Gesù Cristo, nello Spirito Santo », affinchè gli evangelizzati, « destinati a configurarsi a Cristo (...) si abituino anche a vivere intimamente uniti con Lui come amici in tutta la loro vita » [122].

[121] *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 5.
[122] *Optatam totius*, n. 8.

Évangélisation et témoignage

René Latourelle, S. J.

Depuis un siècle environ, la catégorie du témoignage est entrée progressivement dans le vocabulaire ecclésial. Le terme apparaît discrètement dans Vatican I, pour désigner l'Église en tant qu'elle constitue, par elle-même et par toute sa présence au monde, « un grand et perpétuel motif de crédibilité et un témoignage irrécusable de sa mission divine ». Avec Vatican II, il se produit une irruption massive de la terminologie du témoignage. Le thème est omniprésent. Des vocables comme témoignage, témoigner, témoin, reviennent plus de 100 fois et s'appliquent aussi bien à l'Église tout entière qu'à chaque groupe de chrétiens. Au Synode de septembre 1974, le thème est revenu avec une instance nouvelle, cette fois dans le contexte de l'évangélisation. Avec la prédication de l'Évangile et la vie sacramentelle, le témoignage est présenté comme l'une des composantes principales de l'évangélisation. C'est dans ce contexte que se situe la réflexion présente sur le témoignage, dans ses rapports avec la révélation du salut et sa diffusion à travers les siècles.

I. Du Concile au Synode

Vatican II contient bon nombre de déclarations qui demandent à être rapprochées et reliées entre elles pour manifester toute leur fécondité. C'est le cas, nous semble-t-il, pour les notions de révélation, évangélisation et témoignage.

Le Concile, en effet, en déclarant que l'action révélatrice du Christ s'est exercée « par toute sa présence et par la manifestation qu'il fait de lui-même », par ses paroles et par ses oeuvres (DV 2, 4, 14), et en affirmant que la transmission de la révélation s'est accomplie suivant une économie identique,

à savoir par la prédication et la vie des apôtres, et ensuite par la foi professée et vécue de l'Église, affirme équivalemment que la révélation assume la forme d'un témoignage: le témoignage du Christ sur ce qu'il a vu et entendu au sein du Père. Le Concile, toutefois, sans doute pour ne pas se lier à la terminologie de tel ou tel écrit néotestamentaire, n'emploie pas le terme de témoignage, ou de témoigner. S'il le fait, c'est occasionnellement, en référence à S. Jean (GS 3), ou comme l'un des termes du binôme: oeuvres-paroles. Ainsi, dans *Lumen Gentium*, il est dit que le Christ, « grand Prophète », a « proclamé le Royaume du Père par le témoignage de sa vie et la puissance de sa parole » (LG 35).

Appliqué aux chrétiens, le terme désigne cet accord qui doit exister entre l'Évangile prêché et l'Évangile vécu. La vie selon l'Évangile est envisagée comme motif de crédibilité. Le témoignage des chrétiens, en effet, est le terme personnalisé et intériorisé, employé par le Concile, pour désigner ce que Vatican I appelait, plus abstraitement, le signe de l'*Église*. Ce sont les chrétiens eux-mêmes, par leur vie sainte, et ce sont les communautés chrétiennes, par leur vie d'unité et de charité, qui posent le signe de l'Église. C'est en vivant parfaitement leur condition de fils du Père, rachetés par le Christ et sanctifiés par l'Esprit, que les chrétiens font entendre aux autres hommes que le salut est vraiment parmi nous. Le salut accompli et vécu laisse voir, par transparence, le salut annoncé et prêché. De cette façon, le témoignage de la vie accrédite l'Évangile: il le rend croyable, car il montre une âme devenue ce qu'annonce l'Évangile. C'est tout le Peuple de Dieu, souligne le Concile, qui doit répandre ainsi son vivant témoignage « afin de devenir un signe évident du salut qui nous arrive dans le Christ » (AG 21, 15, 37; LG 12). Chaque groupe de chrétiens, suivant sa condition sociale, est invité à vivre de l'Évangile, et à manifester que le salut a touché l'humanité pour la transformer et la vivifier: évêques, curés, prêtres, religieux, laïcs, tous sont appelés au témoignage d'une vie sainte (GS 43; LG 28, 35, 38, 41; AG 11, 24). Plus précisément, les chrétiens témoignent du Christ « en irradiant autour d'eux la foi, l'espérance et la charité » (LG 31) et s'ils « joignent résolument une vie de foi à la profession de cette foi » (LG 35).

Lorsqu'il parle d'évangélisation ou d'action évangélisatrice,

le Concile entend d'abord la proclamation de l'Évangile par la prédication, car il rattache l'évangélisation à la fonction missionnaire de l'Église. Fidèle au commandement du Christ envoyé par le Père (*Mt.* 28, 18-20), celle-ci « continue inlassablement à envoyer les hérauts de l'Évangile jusqu'à ce que les jeunes Églises soient pleinement établies et en état de poursuivre par elles-mêmes l'oeuvre d'évangélisation » (LG 17). L'implantation de l'Église, en terre de mission, s'accomplit principalement par « la prédication de l'Évangile de Jésus-Christ » (AG 6). Évangéliser, c'est identiquement « proclamer la parole révélée » (AG 44). Cette proclamation tire sa force du témoignage rendu à l'Évangile par la vie selon l'Évangile (AG 11, 24).

Le premier document de travail préparatoire au Synode, tout en reconnaissant les sens divers que recouvre le terme d'évangélisation, entend par ce mot, non seulement la première annonce de l'Évangile, destinée aux non-croyants, mais, de façon plus générale, cette « activité par laquelle l'Église proclame l'Évangile afin de susciter la foi des non-chrétiens et de nourrir celle des chrétiens » (prooemium). Le document souligne également que, dans l'oeuvre de l'évangélisation, il y a union intime et nécessaire de l'annonce de l'Évangile et de la vie selon l'Évangile (pars II et III). A propos des antinomies de l'évangélisation, il fait observer que certains réduisent l'évangélisation au témoignage de la vie, tandis que d'autres la limitent à la prédication de l'Évangile. Et il ajoute: « Comment établir que la crédibilité des paroles se trouve dans le témoignage, tandis que l'intelligibilité du témoignage se tire des paroles? ». Bien plus, certains lient à ce point l'efficacité de l'évangélisation au témoignage de la vie ecclésiale qu'ils estiment vaine et stérile l'activité évangélisatrice, tant que l'Église « n'apparaîtra pas pleinement comme le signe de Dieu dans le monde ».

Presque toutes les conférences épiscopales, dans leurs observations sur ce premier document, ont souligné la nécessité du lien à maintenir entre prédication de l'Évangile et vie selon l'Évangile, car la proclamation de la parole et le témoignage de la vie sont les deux faces nécessaires d'une authentique évangélisation. Telle ou telle conférence soutient même que l'évangélisation s'accomplit *d'abord* par le témoignage de la vie, étant sous-entendu que c'est la parole qui éclaire le témoignage de la vie. D'autres, enfin, estiment que l'Église « évangélise »

lorsque, par toute son existence et par toute sa vie, c'est-à-dire sa vie théologale, sa prédication, sa liturgie, ses institutions, ses attitudes, elle suscite et nourrit la foi, l'espérance et la charité des hommes.

Tenant compte des observations adressées par les conférences épiscopales, le dernier document synodal (7 juin 1974) élargit le sens donné au mot « évangélisation ». Le terme désigne « l'ensemble des activités par lesquelles les hommes sont amenés à participer au mystère du Christ » dans la proclamation de l'Évangile » (n. 24). Et plus loin: « Par le mot *évangélisation,* on entend donc toute activité par laquelle le Peuple de Dieu suscite et nourrit une foi vivante. Trois fonctions principales de l'Église s'y rattachent: la prédication de la parole, le témoignage de la vie et l'administration des sacrements » (n. 26). Les conférences épiscopales, souligne le document, voient dans le témoignage « un signe de crédibilité qui crée un attrait pour ceux qui sont en dehors de l'Église et donne aux fidèles une certaine expérience de la présence de l'Esprit-Saint dans l'Église » (n. 33). Le témoignage apparaît comme une illustration de l'Évangile prêché et comme un signe qui en confirme la vérité et l'efficacité. Les formes les plus désirées du témoignage sont celles de la charité, non seulement au niveau personnel, mais encore au niveau communautaire (n. 34). Le document se demande enfin quel est de nos jours le témoignage le plus décisif, et dans quelle mesure les chrétiens sont conscients que « l'Église est jugée selon leur manière d'agir, surtout au plan social et professionnel, et d'après leur façon de pratiquer la justice envers le prochain » (n. 36).

La notion de témoignage apparaît enfin dans la relation présentée en octobre 1974 par le Cardinal Wojtyla, à la suite des premiers échanges entre les membres du Synode. Cette fois, c'est toute l'évangélisation qui est conçue comme un témoignage animé et inspiré par l'Esprit-Saint, don du Christ sauveur. Le témoignage rendu au Christ, aussi bien dans la prédication apostolique que dans l'évangélisation des hommes de notre temps, est une participation au témoignage du Christ, seul et unique Témoin fidèle, en tant que Fils du Père et Révélateur du Père. Le témoignage est l'*âme* de l'évangélisation, et les hommes de tous les temps (les apôtres et leurs successeurs, et tout le Peuple de Dieu) participent à ce témoignage en vertu de l'Esprit. L'évangélisation repose sur le mandat du Christ et s'exerce par la puissance de l'Esprit. Ajoutons que c'est l'action intérieure de l'Esprit qui donne à la parole d'évangélisation une efficacité qui la distingue de toute parole humaine. Il s'est donc produit, au cours des travaux du Synode, un élargissement sémantique de la notion de témoignage. Envisagé d'abord comme l'une des composantes de l'évangélisation, le témoignage en vient à désigner l'ensemble de l'activité évangélisatrice de l'Église.

Ces brèves notations faites à partir du Concile et du Synode, suffisent à montrer que révélation, évangélisation et témoignage sont des notions connexes qui s'impliquent l'une l'autre. La révélation initiale est un témoignage, et elle est accréditée par le témoignage de la vie. De même, la transmission de la révélation s'opère à la fois par la prédication et le témoignage de la vie. L'évangélisation, ou la proclamation de la parole du salut, pour être efficace et croyable, doit être appuyée par le témoignage de la vie. Bien plus, l'évangélisation elle-même est conçue comme une participation au témoignage du Christ, fidèle témoin du Père. Le mot-clé qui donne aux deux autres leur densité et leur intelligibilité, est *témoignage.* Or, si le Concile et le Synode accordent au témoignage une importance primordiale, jamais ils n'en font l'objet d'une réflexion théologique, ni même d'une description plus élaborée, analogue à celles qui ont été proposées pour la révélation et la tradition. Sur la nature comme sur le dynamisme du témoignage, on ne trouve que des indications sommaires. Nulle part, non plus, on ne trouve une véritable réflexion sur les liens qui rattachent le témoignage aux notions voisines d'évangélisation et de révélation. Rien, ou fort peu, sur ses composantes, ses niveaux d'emploi, sa nécessité, ses modalités, ses conditions d'efficacité. C'est cette réflexion que nous voudrions amorcer, tout au moins dans ses grandes lignes.

II. Le témoignage et ses contextes

Le témoignage en contexte profane

Le témoignage appartient au groupe des analogies utilisées par l'Écriture pour introduire l'homme aux richesses du mystère divin: telles, par exemple, les catégories de l'alliance, de la parole, de la paternité et de la filiation. Si la révélation elle-

même prend appui sur l'expérience humaine du témoignage pour exprimer l'un des rapports fondamentaux qui unissent l'homme à Dieu, la réflexion théologique est donc justifiée d'explorer les données de cette expérience. Sans doute, dans ce travail d'analyse, est-ce la révélation qui est normative et qui indique à la théologie le type de purification et de sublimation que doit subir la réalité humaine pour s'appliquer au mystère divin. D'autre part, si l'expérience humaine était sans rapport au mystère de l'Etre divin, la rencontre de Dieu et de l'homme serait impossible: il n'y aurait place que pour des monologues parallèles.

A son degré le plus faible, témoigner [1] signifie rapporter ce qu'on a vu et entendu. Le témoin est celui qui peut informer sur des événements auxquels il a participé, sur des personnes ou des faits qu'il a connus, et qui, dès lors, est capable de rendre compte verbalement de ce qu'il sait, parce qu'il a vu et entendu. Le témoignage repose alors sur une expérience oculaire ou auriculaire. Le contexte le plus fréquent de ce type de témoignage est celui d'un procès. Déjà, à ce premier niveau, la foi au témoignage réclame une certaine démission de la raison et une certaine confiance, car la parole du témoin devient, pour celui qui n'a pas vu ou entendu, substitut de l'expérience même.

En raison de ce contexte judiciaire, le témoignage n'a pas simple valeur d'information: c'est un récit en vue d'un jugement à porter sur des événements, sur les motifs d'un acte, sur le caractère d'une personne. Le témoignage est destiné à influer sur les jurés et sur le juge, qui s'appuient sur lui, comme sur un argument, pour penser, évaluer, décider. C'est pourquoi le récit du témoin, plus qu'un fait mental (constatation et description, information et reportage), est un fait moral: une déposition, à laquelle le serment confère une gravité particulière. Témoigner, dans un procès, c'est déclarer et se déclarer en faveur de quelqu'un ou contre quelqu'un. Il ne s'agit plus simplement de raconter ou de décrire, à la manière d'un journaliste, mais de s'engager soi-même, en pleine liberté, et de porter un jugement de valeur.

[1] Sur le témoignage et ses différents niveaux de profondeur, voir: P. RICOEUR, *L'herméneutique du témoignage*, dans: E. CASTELLI, éd., *La Testimonianza* (Roma, 1972), pp. 38-44; S. BRETON, *Philosophie et témoignage*, ibid., pp. 190-199; C. GEFFRÉ, *Le témoignage comme expérience et comme langage*, ibid., pp. 291-294.

Nous arrivons ainsi au second niveau du témoignage, celui où le témoin s'engage tout entier dans sa parole, se compromet pour elle. Ainsi, dans un témoignage qui met en cause la vie de quelqu'un, le témoin, non seulement exprime une conviction intime sur l'innocence ou la culpabilité de l'accusé, mais il se compromet tout entier dans sa déposition. Sa parole est auto-implicative. En termes équivalents, il dit; « Je déclare cette personne innocente: nier cette innocence, serait me renier moi-même ». L'être et le dire ici coïncident.

Il arrive parfois, et c'est le troisième niveau du témoignage, que le témoin scelle son attachement à la cause qu'il défend, par une profession publique de sa conviction intérieure qui peut aller jusqu'au sacrifice de sa vie. Cette confession, la plupart du temps, se fait dans un contexte d'hostilité, de haine de la part de ceux qui ne partagent pas la même cause. Quand le témoin meurt ainsi pour appuyer son témoignage, il devient *martyr*, c'est-à-dire encore témoin. Cet engagement jusqu'au risque de la vie, rejaillit sur le témoignage-parole qui, alors, n'est plus simple narration de choses vues ou entendues, mais action et mort tragique. On en vient alors insensiblement à appeler témoignage l'action même de risquer sa vie, en tant que ce don est la preuve vivante de la conviction intérieure et du dévouement du témoin à la cause qu'il défend. A ce moment, au niveau sémantique, il y a passage du témoignage-parole au témoignage-action. Et c'est le témoignage-action qui donne sens et valeur au témoignage-parole. Le point fixe autour duquel pivote le changement de sens est l'*engagement* du témoin dans son témoignage. Nous rejoignons ici le contexte biblique, où le témoignage du Christ, le Témoin par excellence, est celui en qui le dire et l'agir coïncident, dans la transparence de son Etre.

Le témoignage comme voie d'accès au mystère des personnes

Lorsque le témoin s'engage tout entier, par sa parole ou son action, il se dit lui-même, dans la plénitude de son existence libre. Dès lors, le témoignage acquiert une profondeur et une dignité singulières quand il a pour objet le mystère intime de l'être personnel. A ce niveau, plus que dans un procès, le témoin ne fait qu'un avec ce qu'il dit. La personne se veut présente et transparente à l'auditeur, dans la vérité de son mystère in-

térieur. Elle peut se tromper, se faire illusion sur elle-même; en raison toutefois de la visée qui l'anime, son témoignage est irrécusable. Rien ne prévaut contre lui.

En effet, lorsque nous quittons l'univers des choses matérielles pour accéder au niveau des personnes, nous quittons le monde de l'évidence pour entrer dans celui du témoignage. A ce niveau, l'idéal scientifique, qui ne règne au surplus que sur l'un des foyers de la réflexion humaine, ne vaut plus.

Au niveau de l'intersubjectivité, qui est celui des personnes, nous nous heurtons au mystère. Or les personnes ne sont pas des problèmes qui se laissent enfermer dans des formules et résoudre dans une équation. Nous n'avons d'accès à l'intimité personnelle que par le libre témoignage de la personne sur elle-même, par une confidence qui est proprement une révélation, un dévoilement de son mystère intérieur. Dire que le témoignage ne produit que des probabilités, et non des certitudes, parce qu'il échappe aux normes de certain idéal scientifique, serait donc manifester une déplorable ignorance de la question. La connaissance par témoignage n'est inférieure que là où, par suite de la nature de l'objet, nous sommes capables d'arriver à une connaissance directe et immédiate du réel; mais elle n'est pas inférieure lorsqu'il s'agit de ces réalités que sont les personnes, où le témoignage est la seule façon d'entrer en union avec la personne et de participer à son mystère. [2]

Le témoignage appartient au mystère de la liberté. Parce qu'humaine, cette liberté, sans doute, est-elle fragile et toujours menacée. L'homme est une identité qui doit toujours se reconquérir. Seul Dieu peut donner à sa parole une garantie absolue, à cause de son identité éternelle et absolue avec lui-même. L'expérience humaine, de fait, nous renseigne sur la multiplicité des erreurs involontaires, même chez les êtres les plus authentiques. Et pourtant, en dépit de ces risques, le témoignage appartient à la grandeur et à la dignité de l'homme. Il le fait participer à l'autonomie et à la liberté même de Dieu [3].

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[2] C. LE CHEVALIER, *La confidence et la personne humaine* (Paris, 1960), pp. 40, 85-88, 179; A. BRUNNER, *La personne incarnée* (Paris, 1947), pp. 255, 256, 268.

[3] M. NÉDONCELLE, *Communication et interprétation du témoignage*, dans: E. CASTELLI, *éd.*, *La Testimonianza*, pp. 280-290; X. TILLIETTE, *Valeur et limites d'une philosophie du témoignage*, ibid., pp. 89-92.

Il subsiste donc, dans le témoignage, une solitude dont le témoin lui-même ne saurait s'affranchir, et qui le rend vulnérable, exposé au refus. Même en Jésus, chez qui l'expérience qu'il a de son identité de Fils du Père, donne à sa parole certitude et valeur absolues, le témoignage n'est pas assuré de recevoir l'accueil qu'il mérite, ce témoignage fût-il signé de son sang.

C'est que le témoignage, enraciné au coeur de la liberté humaine, fait appel à la liberté de celui qui le reçoit. Tandis que la démonstration fait d'abord appel à l'intelligence, le témoignage engage aussi, à des degrés divers, la volonté et l'amour. Il fait appel à la confiance: une confiance plus ou moins profonde, qui se mesure à l'importance de l'objet attesté et des valeurs risquées sur la parole. Déjà, lorsqu'une personne recourt au témoignage pour s'exprimer, elle fait appel à la confiance et s'engage à dire la vérité. Elle s'engage à ne pas trahir cette confiance et promet, au moins implicitement, d'être sincère et vraie. Et, d'autre part, accueillir le témoignage de quelqu'un comme vérité, c'est déjà lui faire confiance, car c'est passer de l'autonomie à l'hétéronomie; c'est renoncer à soi pour s'en remettre à autrui. La possibilité d'un commerce entre les hommes repose même, en définitive, sur cette confiance réclamée par le témoin et sur la promesse, tacitement faite par lui, de ne pas la trahir. D'une part donc, engagement moral du témoin, et, d'autre part, confiance, qui est déjà amorce d'amour, de celui qui adhère au témoignage. Envisagé du côté de l'auditeur aussi bien que du côté du témoin, le témoignage reste un fait moral encore plus qu'un fait mental [4].

Dans le cas extrême où l'homme engage le tout de sa vie sur la parole du témoin, il manifeste une confiance, une foi totale, qui est amour profond du témoin. A cet égard, la foi au Christ est donation totale de la personne au Christ, décision qui engage le tout de l'existence personnelle et le tout de l'existence humaine. L'homme tout entier se livre au témoignage absolu [5].

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[4] R. LATOURELLE, *Théologie de la Révélation* (Bruges-Paris, 1969[3]), pp. 395-396.

[5] « Deo revelanti praestanda est oboeditio fidei, qua homo se totum libere Deo committit, plenum revelanti Deo intellectus et voluntatis obsequium praestando et voluntarie revelationi ab Eo datae assentiendo » (DV 5).

Dès lors, nous n'avons plus à nous étonner que le christianisme soit la religion du témoignage et de la foi. La révélation, en effet, est essentiellement manifestation du mystère personnel de Dieu, qui est l'intériorité par excellence. Le christianisme est la religion du témoignage précisément parce qu'il est manifestation du mystère des personnes divines. Ce que le Christ révèle, en définitive, c'est le mystère personnel qu'il constitue comme Fils du Père, dans la chair et le langage de l'homme Jésus. Les apôtres, à leur tour, témoignent de leur intimité avec le Christ, Verbe de vie, Fils du Père, en relation intime avec le Père et l'Esprit, mais dans une communication si réservée qu'elle n'admet pas de partage. Tout l'Évangile se présente comme une confidence d'amour, un témoignage du Christ sur lui-même, sur la vie des personnes divines et sur le mystère de notre condition de fils [6].

Le témoignage en contexte biblique

Globalement, on peut dire que le témoignage biblique assume, mais en même temps exalte, jusqu'à les sublimer, les traits du témoignage humain. Sous la pression de la réalité nouvelle qui le charge, il y a irruption de sens : en hauteur, en profondeur et en largeur.

Dans l'Ancien Testament, le témoin est avant tout le *prophète*. Ce qui en constitue l'originalité comme témoin, c'est qu'il a été, au sein d'une expérience privilégiée, choisi et envoyé par Dieu. Il connaît Yahvé, parce que Yahvé lui a parlé et lui a confié sa parole. Il a été admis à une intimité particulière auprès de Dieu : appelé à partager sa connaissance, ses desseins, ses volontés, pour en être le héraut parmi les hommes. Le prophète a reçu la parole de Dieu, non pour la garder, mais pour la transmettre, pour la publier. Il est la bouche de Yahvé, le serviteur de la parole, l'interprète autorisé de tout ce qui arrive dans l'univers, parmi les hommes et dans l'histoire, le témoin de Yahvé et de sa parole, dans un climat souvent d'hostilité et de persécution, jusqu'à l'engagement du martyre, qui est le suprême témoignage.

Le témoin, c'est aussi le *Peuple d'Israël*, choisi et appelé

[6] J. GUITTON, *Le problème de Jésus et les fondements du témoignage chrétien* (Paris, 1950), pp. 153-164.

par Yahvé. Le Second Isaïe groupe dans un même texte tous les traits qui caractérisent Israël comme témoin :

> Fais sortir un peuple aveugle qui a des yeux, et des sourds qui ont des oreilles. Que toutes les nations se rassemblent, que tous les peuples s'unissent! Qui parmi eux a proclamé cela et nous a fait connaître les choses anciennes? Qu'ils produisent leurs témoins et qu'ils se justifient, qu'on les entende et qu'on dise: c'est la vérité! C'est vous qui êtes mes témoins, oracle de Yahvé, vous êtes le serviteur que je me suis choisi, afin que vous le sachiez, que vous croyiez en moi et que vous compreniez que c'est moi: avant moi aucun dieu n'a été formé, et après moi il n'y en aura pas. Moi, c'est moi Yahvé, et en dehors de moi il n'y a pas de sauveur. C'est moi qui ai révélé, sauvé et fait entendre, ce n'est pas un étranger qui est parmi vous; vous, vous êtes mes témoins, oracle de Yahvé, et moi, je suis Dieu, de toute éternité je le suis; nul ne peut délivrer de ma main; si j'agis, qui pourrait me faire renoncer? (Is. 43, 8-13).

Quatre traits distinguent le Peuple-témoin : 1. Le témoin n'est pas quiconque se présente pour déposer, mais celui qui a été choisi et envoyé pour témoigner. - 2. Le témoignage porte sur le sens radical de l'expérience humaine : Yahvé s'atteste lui-même et se propose comme celui qui donne sens et consistance à toute la réalité humaine. Il n'y a pas d'autre Sauveur que Yahvé. - 3. Le témoignage est orienté vers la proclamation, la divulgation : il a une portée sociale. - 4. Cette proclamation implique un engagement, non seulement dans les paroles, mais dans les actes et dans la vie [7].

Ainsi, le sens profane du témoignage est retenu dans ses principaux aspects : aspect d'engagement au sein d'une proclamation ; aspect juridique de contestation, au sein d'un procès entre Yahvé et les idoles ; aspect narratif, enfin, implicite dans la confession d'un Dieu qui s'est fait connaître comme Dieu sauveur par ses gestes de salut dans l'histoire. La nouveauté apportée par l'Ancien Testament au sens profane du témoignage, c'est que l'autorité du témoin ne vient pas de lui, mais de sa vocation privilégiée et de son envoi. On distingue, dans la mission du témoin, notamment du prophète, comme deux pôles d'activité, qui parfois se succèdent, mais le plus souvent se recouvrent : l'activité de la proclamation et l'engagement du témoin.

[7] Commentaire suggestif du texte d'Isaïe par P. RICOEUR, *L'herméneutique du témoignage*, dans : E. CASTELLI, *La Testimonianza*, pp. 44-46.

Dans le Nouveau Testament, le vocabulaire des Synoptiques met surtout en évidence l'activité de la proclamation. Jean-Baptiste, le prophète du Très-Haut, est envoyé par Dieu pour proclamer le baptême de pénitence et annoncer le Messie qui vient. Le Christ lui-même prêche, proclame, évangélise, enseigne, révèle. L'objet de cette proclamation, c'est la Bonne Nouvelle du Royaume dont Jean-Baptiste avait proclamé l'imminence et que le Christ inaugure et réalise en sa personne. Les apôtres, à leur tour, prêchent, enseignent, annoncent la Bonne Nouvelle de Jésus, et surtout témoignent.

Le titre de témoins, fréquent dans les Actes, désigne au premier chef les apôtres. Témoigner est leur fonction spécifique. Quatre traits les définissent comme tels: 1. Comme les prophètes, ils ont été choisis par Dieu (*Act.* 10, 41). — 2. Ils ont vécu dans l'intimité du Christ, tout comme les prophètes ont vécu dans l'intimité de Dieu. Ils ont été associés au Christ durant sa vie et l'ont vu après sa résurrection (*Act.* 1, 22): ils ont été les intimes et les commensaux du Christ. — 3. Ils ont reçu mission du Christ pour témoigner (*Act.* 10, 41); et, pour remplir ce mandat, ils ont été investis par la puissance de l'Esprit (*Act.* 1, 8). — 4. Enfin, comme les prophètes, ils manifestent dans leur témoignage une fidélité absolue au Christ et à son enseignement. Les Actes ne cessent de répéter que les apôtres annoncent la parole de Dieu « avec assurance », c'est-à-dire avec un courage surnaturel, fruit de l'Esprit qui agit en eux et triomphe des réactions trop humaines devant les difficultés de l'apostolat: timidité, respect humain, crainte, peur des persécutions et de la mort. Sous l'effet de ce courage intérieur, les apôtres déclarent: « Pour nous, nous ne pouvons pas ne pas dire ce que nous avons vu et entendu » (*Act.* 4, 20). Les apôtres, en effet, sont témoins (oculaires et auriculaires) de toute la vie du Christ, du baptême à la résurrection (*Act.* 10, 39). Mais ils témoignent aussi du *sens* profond de son existence terrestre, à savoir du salut inauguré par sa mort et sa résurrection (*Act.* 5, 31; 10, 41). Le Christ, le Fils du Père, assimilant la volonté du Père jusqu'à cet abîme de la charité qui le conduit à la croix, mais sur l'horizon de la résurrection: tel est l'objet essentiel du témoignage apostolique [8].

[8] N. BROX, *Zeuge und Märtyrer* (München, 1961); IDEM, *Testimonianza*, dans: *Dizionario teologico* (Brescia, 1969), pp. 492-502; Ph.-H. MENOUD, *Jésus et ses témoins*, dans: *Église et théologie* (juin 1969), pp. 1-14; L. CERFAUX, *Témoins du Christ, d'après le Livre des Actes*, dans: *Recueil Cerfaux* (2 vol., Gembloux, 1954), vol. 2, pp. 157-174; R. LATOURELLE, *Théologie de la Révélation* (Bruges et Paris, 1969[3]), pp. 51-60, 75-84, 393-398; IDEM, *Le Témoignage chrétien* (Tournai et Montréal, 1971), pp. 11-22.

Ainsi, dans le Nouveau Testament, comme dans l'Ancien, la narration des choses vues et entendues est inséparable de la confession, c'est-à-dire du sens des événements arrivés. En outre, dans le Nouveau Testament, encore plus que dans l'Ancien, s'opère un passage du témoignage comme fait de parole (annonce, proclamation) au témoignage comme don de la vie pour le Christ. Le moyen terme est l'intériorisation du témoignage, l'engagement du témoin et son identification à la cause qu'il défend, au message qu'il annonce: engagement qui peut aller jusqu'au martyre, expression limite du témoignage engagé. Si, dans le Nouveau Testament, la confession et l'engagement prennent un tel relief, c'est que le noyau du témoignage, l'objet de l'engagement, c'est la personne du Christ, Fils du Père.

Chez S. Jean, le témoignage culmine comme narration, comme confession, comme engagement et comme intériorisation. Le *Témoin*, c'est le Christ (*Apoc.* 1, 5; 3, 14); et, pour le Christ, témoigner, c'est équivalemment manifester le Père, révéler le Père. Le témoignage désigne la fonction révélatrice du Christ, et ce témoignage a pour objet le Christ lui-même, dans son mystère personnel de Fils. Aussi, le Christ rend-il témoignage par toute sa présence, et durant toute son existence. Toute sa vie (paroles, actions, attitudes) est par elle-même activité révélatrice, signe de la réalité qu'il porte en lui. Jésus est témoin de la « vérité » en dévoilant son propre mystère. Pour lui, témoigner, c'est se révéler, se faire connaître: ce qu'il est et d'où il vient, c'est-à-dire du Père. Si cette révélation culmine dans la croix, c'est parce que, dans la croix, s'opère la suprême révélation du Christ, à savoir l'amour suprême du Père pour les hommes, manifesté dans l'amour suprême du Christ pour les siens [9].

Dans la perspective de Jean, le témoignage du Christ, en-

[9] Nous suivons ici l'interprétation de I. DE LA POTTERIE, *Jean Baptiste et Jésus témoins de la vérité d'après le IV^e Évangile*, dans: E. CASTELLI, *La Testimonianza*, pp. 317-329. Voir aussi: I. DE LA POTTERIE, *La notion de témoignage dans S. Jean*, dans: *Sacra Pagina* (2 vol., Paris-Gembloux, 1959), vol. 2, pp. 192-208; A. VANHOYE, *Témoignage et vie en Dieu selon le quatrième Évangile*, dans: *Christus*, n. 6 (avril 1955), pp. 150-171.

core plus que celui des prophètes, a un caractère public et juridique. Son témoignage se présente comme une déposition publique dans le vaste procès qui oppose Royaume de Dieu et Royaume de Satan, le Christ et le monde. En faveur du Christ, il y a le témoignage de Jean-Baptiste, de l'Écriture, de l'Apôtre, de l'Esprit-Saint. Mais la parole du Christ se heurte à la contestation et à la haine. Confrontés avec le Christ, les Juifs, qui représentent l'ensemble du monde hostile à la vérité, rejettent son témoignage et se jugent eux-mêmes. Le témoignage du Christ opère ainsi le discernement des hommes. Le Christ, pourtant, a poussé son témoignage à la limite: il a été le Témoin fidèle et véritable (*Apoc.* 13, 8).

Le Christ est donc le Témoin absolu, celui qui porte en lui la garantie de son témoignage. L'homme, toutefois, ne saurait accueillir, par la foi, ce témoignage de l'Absolu, manifesté dans la chair et le langage de Jésus, sans une attraction intérieure (*Jo.* 6, 44) qui est un don du Père et un témoignage de l'Esprit (1 *Jo.* 5, 9-10). A ce moment, le témoignage s'intériorise presque complètement, car il est dit que celui qui croit au Christ *a en lui* le témoignage de Dieu. Le témoignage que le croyant possède en lui, c'est le témoignage que l'Esprit rend au Fils. Si le témoignage s'intériorise, c'est toujours cependant en référence à la parole du Christ qui extériorise l'intimité de son dialogue avec le Père. Et Jean, pareillement, annonce ce qu'il a vu et entendu du Verbe de vie, afin que par la foi en son témoignage, les hommes entrent en communion de vie avec le Père et son Fils. Le témoignage-confession ne se détache jamais du témoignage-narration [10].

Ainsi, le témoignage biblique est essentiellement religieux. Il s'agit d'un témoignage sur quelqu'un: le Dieu sauveur (Ancien Testament) ou le Dieu-salut-en-Jésus-Christ (Nouveau Testament). Il est à la fois proclamation extérieure de la Bonne Nouvelle du salut, et conviction intérieure, engagement de la personne (non seulement en paroles, mais en actes), pouvant aller jusqu'au don de la vie par le martyre. C'est même cet aspect d'*engagement* qui maintient la continuité entre le témoignage profane et le témoignage religieux. Le témoignage extérieur se double d'un témoignage intérieur de l'Esprit qui rend l'homme capable de

[10] P. RICOEUR, *L'herméneutique du témoignage,* dans: E. CASTELLI, ed., *La Testimonianza,* pp. 49-50.

s'ouvrir à l'Évangile et d'y adhérer par la foi. Sans ce témoignage intérieur de l'Esprit, le témoignage extérieur reste vain et stérile. La notion néotestamentaire de témoignage ne comprend pas encore explicitement le témoignage du sang, sauf dans l'Apocalypse, où il est dit que les disciples du Christ ont triomphé, « grâce au sang de l'Agneau et grâce au témoignage de leur martyre, car ils ont méprisé leur vie jusqu'à mourir » (*Apoc.* 12, 11). Le passage, toutefois, est légitime, car la vérité attestée dans le témoignage chrétien, est la vérité de la mort comme rédemption. Le témoin-martyr atteste la victoire de la mort du Christ et sa vie indestructible. Il atteste l'Absolu du Christ, Témoin absolu.

III. Révélation, Évangélisation et témoignage

Nécessité du témoignage

Le témoignage, conçu comme proclamation de la Bonne Nouvelle du salut en Jésus-Christ, et comme engagement de la vie selon l'Évangile, n'est pas, pour le christianisme, chose simplement souhaitable et hautement recommandable, mais une nécessité de nature. Il ne suffit pas de proclamer l'Évangile comme le salut de l'homme; il faut le montrer vivant, et sauvant l'homme tout entier. L'homme, en effet, qu'il soit croyant ou non croyant, éprouve un invincible besoin de vérification. Il se donne, mais il veut savoir à qui et pourquoi. Il est disposé à accueillir un message qui prétend sauver l'homme, mais à condition que la vie fasse la preuve de la valeur du message.

Déjà, en vertu de son dynamisme intérieur, la foi chrétienne ne saurait se contenter d'être un simple acquiescement à une parole entendue, une adhésion extérieure qui n'engagerait en rien celui qui la reçoit. Une telle foi se nierait au départ, car, de par sa nature même, elle ne vit que si elle se dit et se diffuse, portée par le désir de partager et de se voir partagée. La Bonne Nouvelle du salut, en effet, n'est pas un simple savoir (de type philosophique, historique ou mathématique), mais un message de salut, rattaché à un événement qui a changé le sens de la condition humaine et qui met en question l'existence de quiconque le reçoit. L'Évangile nous dit que l'homme, en Jésus-

Christ, et par Jésus-Christ, est sauvé, et que déjà nous participons à la vie de Dieu. Dès lors, si le christianisme était incapable de montrer ce changement de la condition humaine annoncé par l'Évangile, il avouerait son échec. Le christianisme doit pouvoir montrer que le sacrifice du Christ a réellement sauvé l'humanité et que la grâce méritée par lui est vraiment capable de faire de nous des fils du Père, menant une vie de fils sous la conduite de l'Esprit. Il ne suffit pas de prétendre que l'événement du salut est arrivé, mais qu'il est insaisissable, que la sainteté est donnée, mais que, paradoxalement, rien ne la trahit au-dehors dans le comportement de ceux qui ont reçu l'Esprit. Non, la sainteté doit exister, et, de fait, elle existe. L'action de Dieu, dans l'homme, s'atteste en fruits « de charité, de joie, de paix, de serviabilité, de bonté, de confiance, de douceur, de maîtrise de soi » (*Gal.* 5, 22). De même, si l'Église ne faisait que prêcher un idéal abstrait, jamais vécu et jamais rencontré, elle détruirait l'Évangile et se détruirait elle-même. Plus l'Église parle de sainteté, plus elle doit produire des témoins du salut. Plus elle raconte l'histoire du salut en Jésus-Christ, plus aussi elle doit pouvoir raconter les victoires de la grâce du salut sur le péché des hommes.

Observons encore que le coeur du message du Christ est la révélation de l'Amour absolu, c'est-à-dire d'un Amour qui ne peut être compris qu'à partir de l'initiative même de Dieu qui se donne et s'exprime dans l'amour absolu du Christ: dans cette option totale pour le Père, qui le fait passer au Père, par le baptême de sang et l'incroyable descente de la Vie dans l'abîme de la mort. L'amour de Dieu pour les hommes se manifeste en Jésus-Christ, dans cette remise totale du Christ au Père, dans cette option libre pour la mort, qui est le suprême appel du Père à l'amour de tous les hommes, et le suprême amour du Christ pour le Père. C'est dans cet excès d'amour que les apôtres ont rencontré eux-mêmes l'amour de Dieu: « Nous avons reconnu l'Amour que Dieu a pour nous et nous y avons cru » (1 *Jo.* 4, 16). Ils ont reconnu l'Amour et se sont donnés à lui comme à l'Absolu. A leur tour, par leur vie d'amour, ils ont conquis d'autres hommes à cet amour. L'expérience d'une telle rencontre ne peut se communiquer que par voie de témoignage. Comment, en effet, les hommes qui ne connaissent pas Jésus-Christ, peuvent-ils croire à un tel Amour, sans commune mesure avec l'amour

humain, s'ils ne rencontrent eux-mêmes des hommes qui ont été conquis par cet Amour, et pour qui la vie n'a de sens que si elle est un *être-pour-le-Christ*. On ne peut introduire les hommes à l'amour que par une contagion d'amour. Normalement, c'est dans l'Église, comme communauté d'amour, que naît un tel témoignage. Lorsque les chrétiens font de l'Amour du Christ l'absolu de leur vie, ceux qui sont témoins de ce spectacle, contemplent Dieu qui est aimé et Dieu qui les aime. Ils ont, dans cet amour, la révélation de l'Amour de Dieu. L'amour des hommes entre eux devient le signe, en visibilité, de l'amour du Dieu invisible.

Notons enfin que le christianisme est avant tout un événement (Dieu fait chair), une présence (Dieu parmi nous en Jésus-Christ) et une invitation à une participation de vie. Avec la présence du Christ, nous est révélé un nouveau mode d'existence, un nouveau style de vie. Le Décalogue, dans l'Ancien Testament, exprimait, pour le peuple juif, ce que devait être le style de vie d'un Peuple saint, consacré à Dieu par une alliance. La loi de l'Alliance nouvelle nous est donnée par le Christ lui-même, le Fils du Père menant parmi les hommes une vie de Fils. En effet, ce que le Christ est venu révéler aux hommes, ce n'est pas seulement leur condition de fils, mais le style de vie qui convient à des fils. C'est pourquoi le Christ, le Fils du Père au sein de la Trinité, a vécu parmi les hommes une vie de Fils. Par suite, c'est en écoutant le Christ et en le voyant agir que nous apprenons à vivre en fils du Père. C'est donc par un témoignage qui l'engage tout entier (paroles, actions, gestes, attitudes, exemples, comportement) que le Christ initie les hommes à ce style de vie filial. Il a vécu parmi nous les expériences communes de tous les hommes, mais il a donné un *sens* nouveau à toute la réalité humaine. Il a tout transformé en diffusant sur toute réalité l'Esprit d'amour. Et, du même coup, il a provoqué un reclassement de toutes les valeurs humaines. Après le Christ, on ne regarde plus Dieu, ni les hommes, ni le travail, ni la souffrance, ni la mort de la même façon. Nous comprenons dès lors que le spectacle de ce nouveau type d'existence, tout inspiré par l'Esprit d'amour, exerce sur les hommes, en qui gémit le même Esprit, une attirance secrète. C'est pourquoi aussi il faut qu'il y ait des saints, qui perpétuent dans l'Église cette vie filiale révélée et vécue par le Christ, et qui illustrent,

pour chaque génération, ce nouveau style de vie qu'est une existence parfaitement chrétienne.

La Révélation comme témoignage

Après ce que nous avons dit sur le témoignage profane et sur le témoignage religieux, nous comprenons mieux que la révélation soit un *témoignage* et que le titre qui convient au Christ, dans sa fonction révélatrice, soit celui de *Témoin*. Ici encore, le quatrième Évangile marque l'achèvement de la réflexion néotestamentaire sur Jésus. Si on dit que la révélation est parole de Dieu à l'humanité, il faut aussitôt ajouter que ce qui la spécifie comme parole, c'est qu'elle *invite à la foi* en l'Absolu: elle est de l'ordre du témoignage. Le témoignage est même la seule forme de discours que Dieu puisse assumer, s'il veut dévoiler à l'homme son propre mystère. De fait, le Christ se présente comme le Témoin qualifié, car il est la Parole de Dieu (*Jo.* 1, 2) et le Fils du Père (*Jo.* 1, 18); lui seul connaît le Père, parce qu'il vient d'auprès de lui (*Jo.* 6, 46; 7, 29; 8, 55; 16, 27; 17, 8); il connaît le Père (*Jo.* 7, 29) comme le Père le connaît (*Jo.* 10, 15), car il est dans le Père et le Père est en lui (*Jo.* 10, 30; 17, 21. 23). Il affirme ce qu'il a vu et entendu auprès du Père: « Nous parlons de ce que nous savons et nous attestons ce que nous avons vu, mais vous ne recevez pas notre témoignage » (*Jo.* 3, 11). « Moi, je dis ce que j'ai vu chez mon Père » (*Jo.* 8, 38). « Celui qui vient du ciel témoigne de ce qu'il a vu et entendu » (*Jo.* 3, 32). Le Christ témoigne sur lui-même, sur son rapport au Père et sur la mission qu'il a reçue. En lui, révéler et témoigner coïncident.

Mais son témoignage a ceci d'unique qu'il tire son origine et prend son appui dans la conscience que Jésus possède de sa relation au Père comme Fils. Cette conscience irrécusable de Jésus comme Fils du Père fonde la valeur de son témoignage. Cette conscience, en effet, implique en Jésus l'expérience vécue de l'Absolu et donne à son témoignage valeur absolue. Il est en personne l'Absolu qui témoigne de lui-même et de sa présence parmi nous. Si des signes sont donnés, ce n'est pas que l'Absolu doive se justifier comme absolu, mais comme présent parmi nous. Ils ont pour but, non pas de donner à son témoignage une autorité qu'il n'aurait pas, mais de permettre aux

hommes de l'identifier pour ce qu'il est, à savoir Dieu parmi nous. A cet égard, les miracles du Christ, qui sont les oeuvres conjointes du Père et du Fils, ont pour but d'amener les hommes à découvrir la gloire qui appartient au Christ comme Messie et Seigneur. En faisant passer son témoignage de Fils par la médiation de la chair et du langage des hommes, le témoignage du Christ, comme l'Absolu parmi nous, doit faire le détour des signes contingents que le divin se donne dans l'histoire. Mais une fois opérée cette identification de l'Absolu, par la médiation des signes, notre foi s'adresse au Christ comme à l'Absolu; notre foi est au Christ comme elle est à Dieu. Quand les apôtres confessent le Christ, ils ne séparent pas la personne de son témoignage: d'un seul élan, ils confessent Jésus comme Christ et Seigneur.

Dans le témoignage qu'il se rend à lui-même, et qu'il rend au Père, le Christ met en oeuvre toutes les ressources de son humanité. Son témoignage n'est pas seulement message oral, mais témoignage conjugué de l'enseignement et de la vie. Toute son existence est une parfaite mise en oeuvre pour nous révéler son propre mystère, le mystère de la vie trinitaire et notre propre mystère de fils. Le Christ a exercé sa fonction révélatrice, affirme *Dei Verbum*, « par toute sa présence et la manifestation de lui-même, par ses paroles et ses oeuvres, par ses signes et ses miracles, mais surtout par sa mort et sa résurrection, et enfin par l'envoi de l'Esprit de vérité »[11]. Le Christ s'engage tout entier dans la révélation du Père et de son amour. Son témoignage n'opère pas de dichotomie entre la parole et l'action, entre la parole et la vie. Si, dans certaine présentation de la révélation, on tend à ne voir, dans la vie sainte du Christ, qu'un signe confirmatif de la vérité de son message, plutôt qu'un élément constituant, c'est que, inconsciemment ou non, on réduit la révélation aux seuls *verba*, à l'enseignement formel de Jésus.

Le Christ a poussé son témoignage jusqu'à l'excès de l'amour. Après avoir épuisé les ressources de la parole, de l'exem-

[11] « Quapropter Ipse ..., tota suiipsius praesentia ac manifestatione, verbis et operibus, signis et miraculis, praesertim autem morte sua et gloriosa ex mortuis resurrectione, misso tandem Spiritu veritatis, revelationem complendo perficit ac testimonio divino confirmat, Deum nempe nobiscum esse ad nos ex peccati mortisque tenebris liberandos et in aeternam vitam resuscitandos » (DV 4).

ple et du comportement, il a porté son témoignage jusqu'à l'achèvement du martyre, qui est le témoignage suprême. Tout ce qu'il y a d'ineffable dans l'amour du Père pour les hommes s'exprime alors dans le don de son Fils. Et tout le poids que le Christ veut mettre dans sa parole se charge alors de tout le *sens* qu'il met dans le don de sa vie. Il ne reste plus à l'homme qu'à regarder et à comprendre le témoignage de la vie qui scelle le témoignage de la parole. Il y a dans cet engagement du Témoin jusqu'à l'abîme de la croix, dans cette surabondance d'amour, l'attestation de sa propre crédibilité. L'amour se révèle comme l'amour du Tout-Autre. Aussi Jean, qui a vu les bras étendus, qui a vu couler l'eau et le sang, qui a vu le coeur percé par la lance, témoigne-t-il que Dieu est Amour.

Le Christ est ainsi le garant de sa présence parmi nous comme l'Absolu. Et, pourtant, son témoignage par la parole et la mort serait vain sans l'action de l'Esprit qui atteste au-dedans la vérité de son témoignage extérieur. Car c'est l'Esprit qui ouvre le coeur de l'homme et le rend docile au message entendu. Le témoignage du Christ, dans la double extériorité de sa parole et de sa vie, est toujours conjoint à l'intériorité du témoignage de l'Esprit. Le Christ ne vient jamais seul, mais dans la puissance de l'Esprit.

Tel a été le témoignage du Christ, tel est celui de l'Église. Si le témoignage de l'Église devait se réduire à la transmission d'un corps de doctrine, la révélation appartiendrait au passé. Elle cesserait de vivre et de vivifier. Elle deviendrait discours sur le salut, idéologie sublime, mais sans impact sur la vie. Le témoignage apostolique, au contraire, a été foi vécue au Christ vivant et vivifiant. C'est par le témoignage conjugué de leur enseignement et de leur vie que les apôtres ont obéi au commandement du Christ leur enjoignant de prêcher l'Évangile à toute créature (DV 7). Par suite, ce qui est transmis au Peuple de Dieu, souligne encore *Dei Verbum,* « comprend tout ce qui contribue à conduire saintement la vie du Peuple de Dieu et à augmenter sa foi; ainsi l'Église perpétue, dans sa doctrine, dans sa vie et son culte, et elle transmet à chaque génération tout ce qu'elle est elle-même, tout ce qu'elle croit » [12]. Autant qu'un

[12] « Quod vero ab Apostolis traditum est, ea omnia complectitur quae ad Populi Dei vitam sancte ducendam fidemque augendam conferunt, sicque Ecclesia, in sua doctrina, vita et cultu, perpetuat cunctisque generationibus transmittit omne quod ipsa est, omne quod credit » (DV 8).

enseignement, ce qui est transmis est une vie. Et c'est tout le Peuple chrétien, pasteurs et fidèles, qui est invité « au maintien, à l'exercice et à la profession de la foi transmise » [13]. C'est toute la communauté chrétienne, par le témoignage de sa foi professée et vécue, qui doit assumer la responsabilité de la transmission fidèle de la foi. Tout comme le témoignage du Christ a été indissolublement un *docere* et un *facere,* de même la transmission de l'Évangile à travers les siècles, ou l'évangélisation, doit assumer la forme d'un témoignage qui n'inclut pas moins la confession de la foi par l'engagement de la vie que la proclamation de la foi.

Évangélisation et témoignage

On peut parler de témoignage, à propos d'évangélisation, à un double niveau. Le témoignage se présente d'abord comme l'une des *composantes* de l'évangélisation. Puis, dans une perspective plus générale, et en relation avec la révélation elle-même, dans l'économie de sa transmission et de sa diffusion, on peut dire que l'évangélisation, dans sa *totalité,* se présente comme un témoignage, qui relie le témoignage de l'Église à celui du Christ.

L'évangélisation, en effet, est un vaste processus qui embrasse tout cet ensemble d'activités qui contribuent à faire participer les hommes au mystère du Christ. Elle est à la fois proclamation du salut et actuation du salut. Elle s'adresse à quiconque ignore l'Évangile pour l'amener à l'obéissance de la foi, et à quiconque a déjà la foi, pour réveiller ou alimenter sa foi. C'est pourquoi l'évangélisation intégrale implique la prédication de l'Évangile, l'administration des sacrements et le témoignage de la vie.

Envisagé comme l'une des composantes de l'évangélisation, le témoignage de la vie est au service du message. Le Nouveau Testament, en effet, souligne toujours, comme premier temps de la mission apostolique, l'activité de la proclamation, de l'an-

[13] « Sacra Traditio et Sacra Scriptura unum verbi Dei sacrum depositum constituunt Ecclesiae commissum, cui inhaerens tota plebs sancta pastoribus suis adunata in doctrina Apostolorum et communione, fractione panis et orationibus jugiter perseverat, ita ut in tradita fide tenenda, exercenda profitendaque singularis fiat Antistitum et fidelium conspiratio » (DV 10).

nonce de l'Évangile. La prédication reste l'activité centrale de l'évangélisation et la tâche principale de l'Église. « Malheur à moi, si je n'évangélise pas », dit S. Paul (1 *Cor.* 9, 16). « Je n'ai pas été envoyé pour baptiser, mais pour prêcher » (1 *Cor.* 1, 17). Non pas que les sacrements soient inutiles, mais l'ordre sacramentaire lui-même dépend de l'annonce de la Parole. Pour que le Christ soit connu et le Père glorifié, il faut qu'il y ait des bouches qui annoncent l'Évangile, car comment invoquer Dieu « sans d'abord croire en lui? Et comment croire en lui sans d'abord l'entendre? Et comment l'entendre sans prédicateur? » (*Rom.* 10, 14-17). Prêcher l'Évangile du salut a toujours été considéré par l'Église comme une tâche absolument nécessaire (*Act.* 6, 4).

La prédication de l'Évangile, toutefois, ne saurait se réduire à une activité de parole. Elle doit être à la fois salut annoncé et salut réalisé. Tout comme la foi véritable est d'un seul tenant orthodoxie et orthopraxie. Dans cette perspective, le témoignage désigne avant tout l'engagement d'une vie authentiquement chrétienne. Cet accord entre l'Évangile et la vie donne à l'Évangile crédibilité et efficacité. Le salut annoncé est vraiment accompli, puisque l'homme nouveau annoncé par l'Évangile, vivifié par l'Esprit, est vraiment parmi nous. Grâce au témoignage, l'homme trouve l'Évangile devant lui, comme une réalité incarnée dans des êtres de chair et de sang. La vérité et la vie se font écho et coïncident. L'Évangile devient transparence. Le message fait corps avec le témoignage: le salut annoncé devient le salut présent. Ainsi, l'homme qui prêche l'Évangile et vit de l'Évangile montre et par là démontre l'aptitude de l'Évangile à transformer l'existence humaine et à lui donner une plénitude de sens inédite. Cette harmonie entre l'annonce et la contemplation du salut est à elle-même signe de la présence de Dieu et de la vérité de l'Évangile.

S'il est vrai, d'autre part, qu'il faut donner au terme d'évangélisation une extension plus vaste et entendre par là toute cette activité de l'Église par laquelle celle-ci annonce et suscite la foi vivante de l'humanité, il nous paraît légitime de désigner par le terme de *témoignage* toute cette activité. Il ne s'agit pas de confondre l'évangélisation avec l'action révélante de Dieu qui s'appelle aussi témoignage, mais de manifester que l'activité de transmission et diffusion de la révélation appartient aussi à la

catégorie du témoignage. L'évangélisation est une *participation* au témoignage du Christ.

Par l'évangélisation, en effet, l'Église prolonge le témoignage du Christ et des apôtres. L'évangélisation, c'est la révélation envisagée dans sa phase de diffusion vivante à travers les siècles. Or, tout comme la révélation originaire, en Jésus-Christ, a été un témoignage, de même aussi celle des apôtres et de l'Église. De même que le Christ a témoigné du Père et invité les hommes à la foi par l'engagement de toute sa vie (paroles et actions), de même aussi l'Église proclame l'Évangile du Royaume quand, par toute sa vie, elle tend à susciter et à nourrir la foi, l'espérance et la charité de l'humanité. Par *toute sa vie*, cela veut dire: sans doute par la prédication de l'Évangile, mais aussi par la vie théologale de ses membres et de ses Églises locales, par l'intensité de sa vie liturgique, par son service auprès des hommes pour libérer ceux-ci des servitudes multiformes qui les affligent. L'Église évangélise, quand elle témoigne, par tout ce qu'elle dit et par tout ce qu'elle est, du salut donné en Jésus-Christ; quand elle se présente comme une réalité vivante qui porte en elle la Présence agissante et transformante du Dieu qu'elle prêche. Elle évangélise, quand elle reflète, comme dans un miroir, la charité de Dieu révélée en Jésus-Christ et inspirée par l'Esprit.

Témoigner nous paraît donc le terme le plus exact pour désigner l'ensemble de l'activité évangélisatrice de l'Église. Le terme implique en effet une proclamation et un engagement qui sont le fait de chacun des chrétiens et de toute la communauté ecclésiale. Il implique une invitation à la conversion et à la foi. Il implique enfin une action intérieure, un témoignage de l'Esprit qui insinue et rend soluble dans l'âme ce que le message déclare et explicite. Tous ces traits appartiennent à la notion de témoignage. L'évangélisation procède d'une invitation extérieure (toute la vie de l'Église) et d'une invitation intérieure qui agissent conjointement et qui ont pour but de susciter et de nourrir la foi. Il y a évangélisation efficace, lorsque ce témoignage, prêché et vécu, est rencontré et accueilli dans la foi.

IV. Le témoignage contemporain

Chances et risques du témoignage aujourd'hui

Sans exagérer, nous pouvons dire que le XX[e] siècle constitue un milieu et une époque particulièrement favorables à l'évangélisation du monde par les voies du témoignage. Nous pouvons même dire que les chances du témoignage n'ont jamais été aussi grandes, tout en reconnaissant qu'elles s'accompagnent de risques capables de les compromettre et même de les annuler. Au chapitre des chances, nous inscrivons les facteurs suivants :

Il existe aujourd'hui une *crise de la parole* : crise dont les manifestations prennent des formes différentes, mais qui se solde finalement par un écroulement de la parole. On se plaint des assauts massifs et indiscrets de la publicité, par le journalisme, la radio et la télévision. On se méfie du prurit verbal militant des syndicats, des politiciens, des mouvements de contestation, dont la « prise de parole » a pour but d'empêcher l'autre de parler. On déplore que le mensonge et le parjure interdisent tout accès à la vérité. Un abîme se crée entre celui qui parle et celui qui écoute. Le langage religieux lui-même subit un phénomène d'érosion : on ne sait plus ce qu'il faut entendre par Dieu Père, Fils et Esprit, par rédemption et salut, par conscience, loi et péché. Dans les pays de mission, la communication semble difficile entre Occidentaux et Orientaux. Aux yeux des incroyants, le langage chrétien sonne non seulement étrange, mais étranger. Bref, un nuage de suspicion plane sur le langage. Tout le langage semble pollué, ou ambigu, ou contraignant. Il s'ensuit une perte de confiance dans le témoignage de la parole. D'autre part, cette crise fait désirer un langage assaini, authentique, qui retrouve sa valeur de communication, porteur de ce qu'il dit, appuyé par une action qui le garantisse.

Il existe une *crise du milieu* dans lequel s'exerce l'évangélisation : crise qui se présente sous deux formes. La première affecte des milieux de tradition chrétienne, mais en phase d'agressivité ouverte ou larvée. Dans ces milieux, à mesure qu'on prend ses distances à l'égard de l'Église institutionnelle, on développe une attitude de libre examen. On y parle encore du Christ, de

ses miracles, de sa résurrection et de son oeuvre de salut, de l'Église et de son magistère, des commandements et du péché, du ciel et de l'enfer, mais avec le droit d'interpréter chacun de ces termes librement, et sans référence à une autorité normative. Ce libre examen conduit généralement au relativisme du sens, puis à l'évacuation pure et simple des contenus. Mais, le plus souvent, le milieu dans lequel s'exerce l'action de l'Église est un milieu où la question religieuse ne se pose même pas. On ne voit plus, dans un tel milieu, ce que Dieu ajouterait à une situation de bien-être et de progrès. Ce qui est normal, en maints pays d'Occident surtout, c'est un état d'agnosticisme, d'indifférence. Il s'agit d'un phénomène généralisé, difficile à définir, causé tout à la fois par un lent processus de sécularisation, de critique et de déclin de la religion, de libération de toute norme doctrinale ou morale. C'est sur ce fond d'incroyance que se détache la foi chrétienne. A l'égard de Dieu, comme à l'égard de l'Évangile, nous sommes au point zéro. Il ne s'agit pas d'athéisme militant, mais d'areligion, de non-foi, d'incroyance. Dans ce contexte de plus en plus répandu, on comprend toute l'importance du témoignage rendu à l'Évangile par une existence chrétienne, nourrie de prière et de vie sacramentelle, qui donne du poids à la parole. Témoignage d'autant plus nécessaire qu'il faut laisser à l'autre, plus loin qu'autrefois, le temps de comprendre, à partir de ce qu'il observe, et de se sentir interrogé par une vie orientée différemment. Dans un milieu attiédi, languissant, mourant, la seule prédication valable est celle du *dilexit ... tradidit semetipsum.* Sans bruit, sans en avoir l'air, le témoignage de la vie éveille l'attention, la sympathie, pose une question et amorce, sans le forcer, le mouvement par lequel les âmes s'arracheront à leur inertie pour se mettre en marche vers Dieu. Le témoignage est la prédication du Dieu des oeuvres lentes et patientes.

Plus profondément, il existe une crise qui porte sur le *sens même de l'homme et de l'existence humaine.* Dans un monde désespérément technicisé, l'homme se voit réduit au rang de moyen : moyen de production ou moyen de consommation. Car tout ce qui ne rapporte pas, n'offre pas d'intérêt. Si l'homme intéresse, c'est comme capital. Il est chosifié, instrumentalisé, comme tout ce qui l'entoure. Dans ce contexte, où il n'y a plus de témoins, mais des militants ou des partisans, on « s'enre-

gistre » dans un parti, dans un syndicat. Il n'y a plus de prochain, car il n'y a plus de place pour la liberté et la disponibilité. Tout ce qui fait la dignité de l'homme, à savoir sa capacité d'aimer, de se donner, d'accueillir, de compatir, paraît aboli. Et les hommes, désespérément, attendent ce qui pourrait les affranchir de la technique et donner un sens à toute réalité humaine: à la vie, au travail, à la souffrance, à la solitude, à la mort. Or voici que le témoignage est la chance, pour l'homme, de prendre ses distances par rapport à la technique, en se référant à un *Tout-Autre* personnel, et d'établir avec lui des rapports de personne à personne, fondés sur une libre option d'amour. Le témoin du Christ, celui qui vit de l'Évangile, apparaît comme un être libre, qui sait où il va et qui a trouvé, dans son amour du Christ, un achèvement, une perfection, qui contraste avec toutes les formes d'asservissement de la technique. Aussi l'homme contemporain, isolé et frustré dans ses aspirations les plus profondes, aspire-t-il à connaître cette plénitude de dialogue et de communion personnelle que lui refuse la technique.

Dans ce contexte d'une crise qui atteint à la fois le langage, le milieu et l'homme lui-même, nous voyons, pour le témoignage, une chance inattendue de rencontre et de communication, aussi bien avec les incroyants que les croyants.

L'existence humaine chrétienne, en effet, possède sa propre garantie d'authenticité. Lorsque des groupes d'hommes vivent de l'Évangile, ils affirment du même coup l'emprise sur eux de l'Évangile reconnu comme valeur suprême. Il en résulte une nouvelle image et un nouveau style de vie. Car il existe une certaine façon de vivre les expériences communes à tous les hommes, une certaine façon de réagir aux problèmes et aux épreuves de la vie, un certain comportement dans les relations interpersonnelles et intercommunautaires, qui est proprement le *sens chrétien* de la vie. L'Évangile n'est pas neutre. Il inspire des attitudes, des options, un style. Dans la vie du chrétien, rien n'est changé apparemment (joies et peines, travail, souffrance, deuil, maladie, mort); la vie reste tissée de la même étoffe, et, cependant, tout est différent, parce que chargé d'un sens nouveau. Une attitude unique relie entre elles toutes ces expériences diverses et les interprète en profondeur: c'est la foi au Christ. C'est cette foi qui inspire la justice, la charité,

la compassion, l'amour du prochain, même des ennemis, l'acceptation des épreuves, la sérénité devant la mort.

Le témoignage d'une vie selon l'Évangile peut devenir ainsi moyen de rencontre et de communion avec des incroyants. Il n'y a peut-être pas encore annonce explicite de l'Évangile, mais une question est posée par une présence quotidienne. Ceux qui voient ce style de vie, pourront être amenés à s'interroger à son sujet, puis au sujet du message qui l'inspire. Un jour peut-être viendra où le message pourra expliquer que c'est la foi au Christ qui suscite et explique la vie. Ainsi, dans le témoignage, il y a priorité accordée à l'existence et à l'expérience chrétiennes. Ce que l'Évangile alors perd comme discours, il le gagne en dynamisme vital. Le témoignage, en effet, agit comme une valeur: par attraction et séduction d'un bien. Il révèle à l'homme une qualité de vie que celui-ci n'aurait pas soupçonnée, et à laquelle secrètement il désire participer. Il n'explique pas le christianisme: il le montre présent et agissant dans une existence qu'il a transformée.

Le XX^e^ siècle, qui offre au témoignage de telles chances d'action efficace, constitue en même temps, et assez paradoxalement, celui qui laisse peser sur le témoignage les menaces les plus graves.

Ces menaces viennent des directions les plus opposées et les plus inattendues. D'une part, en effet, on exagère l'efficacité du témoignage. Le chrétien, dominé par la civilisation technique, en arrive parfois à apprécier le témoignage en termes de productivité. Le témoignage vaut ce que vaut son rendement. Menace insidieuse qui risque d'avilir la plus noble des réalités. Le témoignage, oeuvre conjuguée de la liberté et de la grâce, ne saurait s'apprécier en termes de succès quantitatifs. Il appartient à l'Esprit de féconder le témoignage et de lui faire produire les fruits qu'il veut et quand il veut. Aux yeux superficiels et mondains, le plus grand témoignage, celui du Christ, s'est soldé par un échec retentissant. Et, pourtant, de cet échec a jailli la vie. Un témoignage qui n'est pas inspiré par l'Esprit est stérile et vain.

D'autres, devant l'écroulement des tentatives d'action par la parole, en viennent à évacuer pratiquement, dans l'évangélisation, l'activité d'annonce et de prédication pour ne retenir comme valable que le témoignage de l'existence chrétienne. Toute

activité de proclamation est tenue pour suspecte. Le christianisme, dit-on, n'a pas besoin de publicité; il n'a pas à exercer de prosélytisme, ni à procéder à des opérations de repêchage. Il agit de lui-même, par infusion de sens et rayonnement de vie. Nous le reconnaissons, et nous l'avons noté plus haut, il peut arriver, dans des milieux particulièrement hostiles à l'Évangile, ou totalement inertes à l'audition de la Parole, que le témoignage de la vie ait plus d'impact que le message annoncé, prêché, publié, et que l'évangélisation doive prendre la forme silencieuse et implicite d'une vie tout inspirée par l'Évangile. Mais cet effacement de la Parole au bénéfice de l'action engagée, tient au contexte actuel de l'évangélisation, en maints pays, plutôt qu'à sa nature et à l'économie voulue par Dieu. Normalement, l'évangélisation implique, comme composante essentielle, une proclamation du salut en Jésus-Christ. Car s'il est vrai que la crédibilité de la parole se trouve dans le témoignage, c'est le message qui donne au témoignage sa pleine intelligibilité. En dernière instance, le témoignage aura toujours besoin du discours pour expliquer la source secrète de son efficacité.

Dans un sens tout à fait opposé pèse sur le témoignage une menace qui affecte sa raison même d'exister. Certains, en effet, expriment des doutes sur l'utilité et même la possibilité d'annoncer l'Évangile, avec quelque chance de succès, dans le monde d'aujourd'hui. On estime que l'influence du christianisme est appelée à diminuer pour devenir le fait d'une minorité. Dans ce contexte, on n'est plus persuadé qu'on a quelque chose de décisif à dire, et que d'autres pourraient entendre. Alors on se tait. On se demande même ce que pourrait ajouter le témoignage de la vie. Le témoignage s'éteint comme parole et comme vie. Cette attitude, au surplus, s'estime favorisée par des réflexions théologiques sur la médiation ecclésiale invisible, sur la foi implicite, sur les chrétiens anonymes, sur la grâce salvifique universelle. Si on examine de plus près cette attitude sceptique ou pusillanime, on constate qu'elle procède, ou bien d'une foi attiédie ou, le plus souvent, d'une absence de réflexion sérieuse sur la nature du christianisme, sur l'histoire de l'Église et sur la nature du témoignage chrétien. Il y a plus de cendres que de feu, plus d'inertie que de courage, plus d'ignorance que de vraie science.

Certains, enfin, sous prétexte de prendre parti pour l'homme, refusent de s'identifier comme croyants. Ils se veulent hommes avec les hommes, sans autre distinction. Attitude pour le moins ambiguë. En réalité, celui qui renonce à être témoin, élimine sa référence au Christ. Ce n'est pas à l'égard des hommes qu'il prend ses distances, mais à l'égard de celui qui donne un sens à tout. Croire au Christ implique un choix. Le croyant, par une libre option en faveur du Christ, cesse de vivre dans un univers plat, pour donner un relief décisif à la personne du Christ. Ce choix, en un sens, le distancie des autres hommes, car il donne une valeur éminente au Christ et une valeur relative à tout le reste. Mais, en même temps, il le rapproche des hommes plus que ne le ferait un nivellement humanitaire. Car c'est dans le Christ seul qu'affleure le mystère des « autres » dans leur vérité profonde. Les « autres », en effet, c'est le Christ, appel du Père à l'amour de tous les hommes. Dans le Christ, il n'y a plus que l'amour du Père et du Fils, et l'amour de tous les hommes rassemblés par le même Esprit. L'homme n'est jamais plus homme et plus proche de l'homme que lorsqu'il témoigne du Christ. Au contraire, une option pour l'homme, sans le Christ, rapidement se vide de sens et perd son dynamisme. Ajoutons que, dans bien des cas, cette obsession de l'anonymat, même chez des clercs, a sa source non avouée dans un vide doctrinal et spirituel vertigineux. On n'a rien à dire, car on ne sait rien et on n'est rien. On a surtout peur d'être interrogé par d'autres chrétiens ou des incroyants, car on se trouverait démuni et dans l'impossibilité de fournir une réponse valable. On parle alors de conversion à l'homme et d'ouverture au monde. A force de ne vouloir être qu'un homme parmi les hommes, le Christ disparaît, puis bientôt l'amour même et le service des hommes. Il ne reste plus que l'homme, dans son désert, avec autour de lui des hommes assoiffés et affamés.

On le voit, les menaces qui pèsent sur le témoignage, dans le monde d'aujourd'hui, procèdent, ou bien d'un excès de foi en son efficacité, ou au contraire d'un doute sur sa valeur et son efficacité: doute qui tient au milieu d'incroyance dans lequel se déploie le témoignage chrétien, ou qui procède d'une volonté sincère, mais mal éclairée de rapprocher les hommes entre eux pour les rapprocher du Christ. Elles sont d'ordre circonstanciel et n'entament en rien la validité du témoignage.

Traits spécifiques du témoignage contemporain

L'analyse précédente a manifesté, croyons-nous, que, pour être efficace et atteindre les hommes de notre temps, le témoignage doit revêtir des modalités nouvelles et bien spécifiques. Parmi plusieurs, nous en retiendrons quatre:

L'homme contemporain est plus sensible qu'autrefois au respect, par le chrétien, des valeurs humaines reconnues dans le monde séculier. Par exemple: la compétence professionnelle, l'efficacité du travail, le souci et le respect de la vérité, la probité et l'humilité dans la recherche scientifique, la franchise et la sincérité dans les rapports humains, la cohérence entre les paroles et les actes, le respect de la parole donnée, le respect de la liberté de conscience, le respect du bien d'autrui, le sens du service public. L'homme contemporain éprouve du respect pour celui qui est engagé dans sa tâche (religieux, clerc ou laïc) et la remplit avec fidélité et conscience. Il s'incline devant celui qui sait participer aux joies, mais aussi aux souffrances, aux angoisses des hommes de son milieu. Au contraire, si le chrétien ne manifeste pas de respect, ou manifeste trop peu de respect pour ces valeurs reconnues par le monde séculier, sa profession de foi chrétienne, fût-elle ouverte et véhémente, risque de rester sans écho. L'homme contemporain demande au chrétien qui se réclame de l'Évangile, de respecter les valeurs de l'homme, qui sont d'ailleurs assumées tout entières par l'Évangile. Il ne pense pas que le chrétien puisse parler sérieusement de sainteté, s'il est menteur, voleur, paresseux, incompétent.

Autrefois, les missionnaires assumaient seuls la responsabilité de porter l'Évangile hors des frontières de l'Église. Il en va tout autrement aujourd'hui dans un monde de plus en plus unifié, où le moindre événement survenu dans un pays devient aussitôt, grâce à la publicité, un fait universel. Le témoignage évangélisateur de l'Église ne saurait donc se réduire au témoignage individuel. C'est tout le Peuple de Dieu qui est dépositaire de la Parole du salut et qui est responsable de sa transmission par ses paroles et par sa vie. La solidarité du témoignage chrétien, dans le bien comme dans le mal, devient désormais un fait intensifié par la présence simultanée de tous les hommes. On ne saurait exagérer l'importance de cet aspect du témoignage contemporain. Car, en définitive, c'est l'image que l'Église, comme collectivité, présente au monde, qui en fait un signe expressif et contagieux, ou un signe négatif, du salut qu'elle prêche. Sans doute, cette image de l'Église, qui résulte du témoignage communautaire, ne préjuge en rien de la sainteté personnelle des membres de l'Église. Sans doute aussi, ne faut-il pas demander à l'Église de renoncer à sa mission de Témoin, sous prétexte qu'elle n'est jamais assez pure. Même dans ses conditions optimales, la sainteté de l'Église sera toujours une sainteté de tension et d'accomplissement partiel. Reste que c'est l'Église d'aujourd'hui qui est appelée à donner aujourd'hui un témoignage communautaire. Ce témoignage est celui d'une conversion constante et constamment renouvelée. Il doit se traduire par des gestes d'unité dans la foi et la charité, par des attitudes de pardon mutuel, de repentir, de réconciliation, de service des pauvres, de recherche de la justice et de la paix, d'union et de communion autour de la table eucharistique.

Si ce témoignage doit devenir plus universel, plus oecuménique, plus missionnaire qu'autrefois, il va sans dire qu'il doit s'intensifier entre catholiques eux-mêmes. L'Église, dans ses communautés locales et comme communauté mondiale, doit apparaître, au sein des autres communautés, comme une communion particulièrement fervente dans l'Esprit. Elle doit donner au monde, par le rayonnement de sa charité, le signe efficace de l'invasion de l'Amour de Dieu parmi les hommes. Si les Églises locales et si les catholiques se refusaient les uns les autres, c'en serait fait du témoignage ecclésial. Les hommes d'aujourd'hui demandent des signes de la venue du salut parmi les hommes. Or les signes qu'ils réclament avant tout, ce sont ceux d'une communauté ecclésiale plus authentiquement fidèle au Christ, plus désintéressée, plus consacrée à Dieu et aux hommes, plus unie, plus aimante.

Une forme particulièrement efficace et désirée du témoignage ecclésial concerne son engagement au service de la justice et de la paix dans le monde. Les hommes attendent de l'Église qu'elle fournisse la preuve tangible de l'attachement à la justice et à la promotion de l'homme qu'elle exprime dans sa prédication. Au concret, cela veut dire qu'elle dénonce les injustices sociales et ne collabore pas avec les forces économiques ou politiques d'oppression; qu'elle travaille à libérer l'humanité de toutes les formes de servitude, matérielle ou spirituelle. A cet

égard, le manque d'engagement des pays soi-disant chrétiens pour plus de justice et de vérité, est un scandale pour les pays pauvres. Positivement, on attend de l'Église qu'elle oeuvre pour la justice et participe à l'élévation morale et sociale de l'humanité; qu'elle se fasse la servante des pauvres et des démunis; qu'elle se compromette pour faire cesser les luttes fratricides, l'hostilité et la haine parmi les hommes.

Le lieu par excellence de cette unité de charité dont la communauté ecclésiale doit témoigner pour être vraiment signe de l'avènement du salut, est l'eucharistie comme assemblée et comme sacrifice. L'eucharistie, en effet, recueille tous les moments de la présence du Christ, comme aussi tous les moments de la vie de l'Église. Elle est le repas du souvenir, le mémorial de la passion et de la mort salvifique du Christ, qui a donné naissance à l'Église. Dans le présent, elle est communion de tous les fidèles au Christ vivant et glorifié, et communion de tous les fidèles entre eux. Ce qui s'accomplit dans l'eucharistie est donc déjà un rassemblement d'amour, mais en même temps un appel à une extension de cette unité à tous les hommes. S'il est vrai que les hommes d'aujourd'hui attendent de l'Église le témoignage de l'amour, c'est dans l'eucharistie que ce mystère de l'amour atteint son maximum d'intensité et de visibilité. Car la célébration eucharistique est une épiphanie de l'Église dans ce qu'elle a de plus profond. Le Peuple de Dieu, en effet, y apparaît rassemblé dans l'unité et la charité, la confession de ses fautes, l'audition de la parole, le baiser de paix, la communion au sacrifice du Christ; il y apparaît en même temps actif et passif, immolant et immolé, pécheur et saint, un et communauté, recueilli en lui-même et ouvert aux autres, soucieux de glorifier Dieu et de se sanctifier. Si le baptême est le signe de la foi et de l'obéissance à la parole, l'eucharistie est le signe de l'amour qui répond à l'amour. Si jamais l'Église doit attirer les hommes d'aujourd'hui, c'est d'abord en vivant le rassemblement d'amour signifié et opéré dans le rassemblement eucharistique. Et c'est pourquoi un déclin ou un affaiblissement de la foi et de la vie eucharistique porterait gravement atteinte à l'une des formes les plus élevées du témoignage communautaire.

V. Le témoignage dans l'Esprit

Tout au long de cette étude, nous avons souligné que le témoignage chrétien comporte un aspect d'intériorité, oeuvre de la grâce, qui le distingue de tout autre témoignage et lui confère une efficacité unique. Le témoignage extérieur du Christ, des apôtres ou de l'Église ne saurait être accueilli sans cette action intériorisante de l'Esprit. L'Écriture parle d'une révélation intérieure (*Mt.* 11, 25-27; 16, 17), d'une ouverture du coeur (*Act.* 16, 14), d'une illumination de Dieu, d'une onction de l'Esprit (*2 Cor.* 4, 4-6), d'une attraction intérieure (*Jo.* 6, 44-45), et, enfin, d'un témoignage de l'Esprit (*1 Jo.* 5, 6). L'homme ne saurait s'ouvrir au monde nouveau que lui découvre l'Évangile sans cette action de l'Esprit. Celui qui croit au Christ, se rend au témoignage de l'Esprit opérant en lui pour lui faire accepter la parole du salut.

Ce témoignage intérieur, qui est l'autocommunication, directe et gratuite, que Dieu fait de lui-même à tout homme venant en ce monde, est à l'oeuvre avant même que n'ait retenti le message de l'Évangile. Mais ce témoignage intérieur, dans l'économie actuelle, est ordonné à l'Évangile: l'Esprit est en attente de la parole pour la féconder et la faire fructifier. Sans doute, l'objet du témoignage intérieur ne diffère-t-il pas de l'Évangile, car dans les deux cas il s'agit de Dieu qui se donne à l'homme pour l'introduire à une communion de vie avec lui. Mais c'est par le message de l'Évangile seulement que le dessein salvifique de Dieu en Jésus-Christ est identifié, connu et porté à la connaissance des hommes.

Lorsque le message a été donné et prêché, c'est encore l'Esprit qui atteste au-dedans que cette parole est vérité et salut, et qui meut l'homme à se donner à l'Absolu. Ainsi, dans le mouvement de retour par lequel l'homme s'ouvre à l'Évangile et l'atteste comme parole à lui personnellement adressée, c'est encore l'Esprit qui témoigne en faveur du Christ. L'homme, en effet, ne saurait se livrer à l'Amour absolu qui se manifeste en Jésus-Christ, sans une action intérieure qui recrée l'homme par le dedans et lui permet d'accueillir le Tout-Autre. Sans le témoignage de l'Esprit, l'homme ne saurait « se convertir », renoncer à prendre appui sur ce qu'il voit, pour s'abandonner

sur parole à ce qu'il ne voit pas. Le témoignage de la foi au Christ, conçu comme don inconditionné de soi-même à l'Absolu, est toujours une attestation de la grâce: un témoignage donné dans l'Esprit. Dans ce témoignage, l'Esprit témoigne de lui-même et il n'est entendu et accueilli que par la grâce qu'il constitue.

De même aussi, c'est dans l'Esprit et sous l'action de l'Esprit que le prédicateur doit rendre témoignage à l'Évangile. Et c'est dans la mesure où il vit lui-même du Christ et de son Esprit qu'il peut attendre de son témoignage influence et efficacité. Car celui qui vit du Christ, a en lui l'Esprit du Christ, et sa parole participe à la puissance de la parole du Christ.

Ainsi, il y a toujours action conjuguée du témoignage extérieur et du témoignage intérieur, de la proclamation extérieure et de l'attraction intérieure. Le Christ, les apôtres, l'Église déclarent ce que l'Esprit insinue et fixe dans les âmes.

L'évangélisation comporte donc un triple témoignage ou une triple invitation à la foi. L'Église, par ses prédicateurs, interpelle et invite à la foi par l'annonce du salut (témoignage *extérieur*) et par l'engagement de sa vie en accord avec l'Évangile (témoignage extérieur *intériorisé*); en même temps, l'Esprit témoigne au-dedans, invitant celui qui écoute à s'abandonner au Dieu invisible et à fonder sur lui le tout de sa vie (témoignage *intérieur* et *intériorisant*). L'Évangélisation, conçue de façon intégrale, peut donc être comprise comme un grand témoignage[14] rendu au Christ par toute la vie de l'Église comme Peuple de Dieu: par sa prédication (foi confessée), par son existence engagée (foi vécue) et par l'Esprit qui l'habite et la meut. Car c'est l'Esprit qui pousse l'Église à poursuivre son oeuvre d'évangélisation; c'est l'Esprit qui la sanctifie et féconde le témoignage de sa vie; et c'est l'Esprit qui inspire la foi, la nourrit et l'approfondit. C'est l'Esprit qui relie entre eux ces trois témoignages qui n'en font qu'un: celui de la *parole-vécue-dans-l'Esprit*. Par son témoignage, l'Esprit intériorise le témoignage extérieur de la Bonne Nouvelle du salut en Jésus-Christ et le porte à l'accomplissement de la foi, qui est la réponse d'amour de l'humanité à l'appel d'amour du Père par le Christ.

[14] Sur ce thème du témoignage ecclésial, voir N. COTUGNO, *El testimonio en el Concilio Vaticano II* (Montevideo, 1974), pp. 167-290.

Evangelization and the sacraments

P. NEMESHEGYI, S. J.

Should we proclaim the Gospel to the world and why? This question, the answer to which seemed to be absolutely evident for two millennia of christian history, has become a burning problem in the post-conciliar Church. It is not only a theoretical problem, but a highly practical one. It affects the whole outlook and activity of the Church; it affects the meaning of the whole life of many christians engaged in the work of evangelization; it affects the choice of a vocation of many young people. And, we must add, the answers given to this question by several post-conciliar theologians are far from satisfying.

The problem becomes, however, still more acute, if we ask further: even supposed that we have to proclaim the Gospel to the world, why should we insist on people being baptized and joining the eucharistic community? If man is saved through faith in the word of God, what is the role and importance of the sacraments? This, again, is not only a theoretical question, but a very practical problem. It affects also thoroughly the whole activity of the Church.

It is, of course, impossible to treat these great problems sufficiently in one short article. But it might be possible to shed some light on the basic issues. The questions asked being radical ones, we have to reconsider the very roots of Christianity.

WHAT IS EVANGELIZATION?

The word « evangelize » has been taken over by Christ and the Christians from Isaias (52, 7; 61, 1. Cf. Lc 4, 18-19; Rm 10, 15). It means in the Christian context the telling of the great good

news: the Kingdom of God has come (Mc 1, 15), God is with us (Mt 1, 23; 28, 20), « he rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us safe into the Kingdom of his Son » (Col 1, 13). Expressing these good news in johannine terms we can say: the ultimate truth, which is the eternal union of being and love between the Father and the only begotten Son, has been revealed to us by the union of action and love between Jesus and the Father, so that those who believe in this Truth which is the very being of Jesus are loved by the Father, just as He loves his only begotten Son, and are thus received into the union of the Father and the Son, which is eternal life [1].

In men who receive this Gospel, it becomes « justice, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit » (Rom 14, 17); it becomes a new freedom and a new dynamism of love (Rm 8, 2). Men, surprised by this joy, who have learned and appropriated the loving care of God for all human beings, cannot but tell others this message of joy and life: « I spoke because I believed » « We speak because we believe » (2 Cor 4, 13). Faith and love naturally bring forth witness and service. The proclamation of the good news of God's love by Christ is continued, in the light of Christ's death and resurrection, by all his disciples and will go on until the limits of the earth and until the end of time.

What is the *purpose* of this evangelization? Nobody has expressed this better and in a more succinct way, than Augustin in his treatise « On the Catechising of the Uninstructed »: « Christ came mainly for the purpose that man might learn how much God loves him; and that he might learn this, to the intent that he might be kindled to the love of Him by whom he was first loved, and might also love his neighbour at the command and showing of Him who became our neighbour ... Take this love, therefore, as the end that is set before you, to which you are to refer all that you say, and, whatever you narrate, narrate it in such a manner that he to whom you are discoursing *on hearing may believe, on believing may hope, on hoping may love* » [2]. As love is Being and Life, men who love as Christ has loved, will be and live for ever.

[1] Cf. the excellent study of Yu Ibuki, *Die Wahrheit im Johannesevangelium*, Bonner Biblische Beiträge, 39, Bonn, 1972.

[2] *De catechizandis rudibus*, c. IV, n. 8.

Evangelization to-day

Before going deeper into the question of the meaning of this evangelization, let us consider for a moment the concrete form which it has taken in history and which it is beginning to take in our days.

In a world where the flow of information was scanty, slow and limited where books were rare and expensive, where the great majority of men could not read, the main — and often the only — way of spreading the Gospel was the physical presence of the believing witnesses and their oral proclamation, accompanied by the witness of God's power in their life. Such a spreading of the Gospel was done either through a kind of osmosis, realized through social contact — there are some delicious descriptions of the way how kitchen-women spread the faith amongst their pairs in the « True Word » of Celsus [3] —, or through a more purposeful journeying for Christ, as we can see it in the great « missionaries » of the Church, beginning from the first apostles up to the « foreign missionaries » of modern age.

The situation of the modern world, however, has changed radically in some points which affect the accomplishment of this task: the flow of information has become overwhelmingly copious, ubiquitous and instantaneous; after a few decades the net of radio, television, telephone, communication-satellites, newspapers, books, etc. will spread over the entire globe: no isolated spots will remain; through printing and the electronic media, communication is not bound any more to the local, physical presence of the speaker; more and more people can read; and the electronic media reach even those who cannot or care not to do so.

In this completely new situation the physical presence of the witness of faith as a mediator for the proclamation of the Gospel has certainly not become superfluous. Personal friendship, dialogue, the « magnetism » of a preacher, the controllable experience of the witness of faith, which consists in a life pursuing only the Kingdom of God and its justice, these elements will always remain most important means for awakening the

[3] Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, III, 55.

faith in men's heart. But they will not be the only ones. To-day whatever Christians are, do and say, is (or, at least, can be) spread immediately over the whole world. Therefore today the Church accomplishes its task of evangelizing by its whole existence, its whole life, all its deeds, all its words, insofar as these are « evangelical » and thus able to excite in the heart of men faith, love and hope. On the contrary, the Church will be deficient in her task of evangelization not only if she does not send out journeying missionaries, but also if her life, action, words, etc. do not help, but rather hinder men seeing (through pictures, television, etc.) and hearing (through radio, books, newspapers, magazines, etc.) them from believing in the love of God and from joining their own heart with God's heart loving all men. Just to give an example: bloody fights between « Catholics » and « Protestants », reported daily by the great japanese newspapers, and interpreted by the readers as a continuation of the history of inter-christian violence (religious wars, execution of heretics, etc.), are a tremendous impediment of evangelization and a daily blow against the credibility of the Christian Gospel of Love.

By saying that the whole existence and life of the Church has today an evangelizing (or counter-evangelizing) dimension, I mean her life in all its various forms:

the personal life of faith, hope and love,

the concrete life of Christian communities with their common liturgy, their mutual union, their concrete love and service for human society,

sermons, conversations, scientific books, works of art (music, fiction, motion-pictures) etc., which express in some way the mind and heart of Christ and show or insinuate the ultimate revelation of the christic meaning of human existence,

the concrete organisms of the institutional Church, functioning as an evangelical service,

the various endeavours of Christians undertaken in order to liberate men of various spiritual and material servitudes,

the sending out of heralds of the faith to places where Christ is not yet sufficiently announced, in order to gather local communities of believers around the table of the Lord, etc.

In one word: the whole existence and life of the Church, as far as it is moved by the Holy Spirit, is — on account of the natural and supernatural solidarity of mankind — at the same time also an element in fulfilling the task of evangelization. The more and the better the community of Christians expresses in itself, as in a kind of mirror, that divine love which has been revealed by Jesus and is poured in our hearts by his Holy Spirit, the more and the better it fulfills its mission of proclaiming the Gospel to the world. Today's man is allergic to mere words, but he is moved by the reality of unconditional love. He feels that only love is worthy of belief[4]: more the Church becomes, both in word and in deed, a community believing in absolute Love, built on love and seeking nothing but love, the more will her reality — the knowledge of which is spontaneously spread by the various means of communication — be a presence of evangelization.

Man savable; God saving

But let us now return again to the question of the ground of evangelization. We can approach it through a consideration of man's concrete being. Man experiences himself finite in his achievement, but infinite in his longing; finite in his life-span, but yearning for eternity; ruled by a world of space and time which is silent to his tears, indifferent to his wishes, and will bury all his achievements, while feeling that the merely ephemeral is non-sensical; creating relations of interpersonal love which are severed by human fickleness or death, while experiencing that true love postulates the eternity of the beloved; knowing himself as a sinner who has acted against the dictates of an absolute command, and who could be put right only by a forgiveness coming from the Absolute itself.

This phenomenology of man, more or less clearly experienced by many people, is clarified by revelation: man is a sinner, both individually and collectively, and cannot obtain « life » without the forgiving visitation of God, who graciously assumes him, his loving human community and his achievements, into God's own life, love and eternity.

This is God's answer to the cry of man: God gives himself

[4] Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Glaubhaft ist nur die Liebe*, Einsiedeln, 1963.

to the world of man: the transcendent Lord becomes immanent life that we might live through him; the eternal Word becomes temporal man in order to eternalize him; the Holy One enters the very solidarity of sinful mankind and suffers until the very end its conflict in order to bring it reconciliation; the Immortal One is killed and thus shares our death in order to be raised and to raise us to life everlasting; the One who is unconditional Love is given for those who do not love in order that they should love, and thus be and live, because God is, by identity, Being, Love and Life.

This self-communication of God is not the result of necessity: it is a free, personal gift of grace and mercy; it is a mystery, the revelation of which filled its first heralds with an overwhelming sense of wonder [5] and which drew from them the tribute of jubilant gratitude: « So much has God loved the world! » (Jn 3, 16).

The two ways of God's self-communication and their essential connexion

This self-communication of God to man is realized on account of its very nature by a double movement [6]:

1) The objective revelation of God, accomplished by deeds and words, within the public sphere of human history: this revelation leads up through the history of Israel, Moses and the prophets, to Jesus Christ, who is its peak and its completion: Christ's deeds and words, his death and resurrection, his whole being are the definitive revelation of God and of man. Christ does not only speak the words of God, but he is the Word of God expressed in a concrete human existence. Therefore he is the last word of God spoken inside of history: God himself cannot say and do more for man, than sending and giving us his only begotten Son. His resurrection is the eschaton already realized and he is constituted as the Omega of all. This objective revelation is proclaimed by the Church of Christ, through evangelization and the sacraments.

2) The presence and attraction of the Holy Spirit, working

[5] Cf. *Col* 1, 26, etc.

[6] I follow here the ideas, expressed very often by Karl Rahner.

in the subjective depth of man's heart. On account of this attraction of the Spirit, man's heart cannot rest until it is submerged by the floods of the infinite Fountain of all goodness; on account of this attraction nothing finite can satisfy us completely; on account of this attraction we are inclined to believe stubbornly in the meaningfulness of existence, notwithstanding the tremendous power of death and evil; on account of this attraction we are stirred to accept with gratitude everything which happens to us as a gift, bestowed by some hidden Giver; on account of this attraction we are drawn to love our neighbours with an absolute and unconditional love, even at the price of our own very life; on account of this attraction we are moved to believe in the radical Goodness of Being and in its merciful love towards us.

There is an essential connection between these two movements of divine self-communication:

1) « No one can profess ' Jesus is Lord ', unless he is guided by the Holy Spirit » (1 Cor 12, 3). « If faith is to be shown, the interior help of the Holy Spirit must precede and assist, moving the heart and turning it to God, and opening the eyes of the mind » (Constit. on Divine Revelation, n. 5). Revelation is by its very nature a twofold self-communication: the objective words of God can be accepted by subjective faith only if God sustains them from both sides: « The abyss is calling to the abyss »: God's abyss of love, shown forth in Christ, is accepted at the deepest level of our personality, when this has become one with the abyss of God's Spirit; by faith we join our voice to the echo, resounding in this abyss.

2) No one can love as Jesus has loved (both God and man, with the one undivided movement of charity), unless the new law of the Spirit is engraved in his heart as a liberating dynamism through the presence of the Spirit of Christ.

3) The Holy Spirit comes to us from the paschal mystery of Christ. He is sent to us as an extension of the messianic anointing of Christ by the Spirit [7]. The eternal intercession of the Risen Lord is the source of the Spirit's eternal presence

[7] Cf. the excellent work of Heribert Mühlen, *Der Heilige Geist als Person.* Beitrag zur Frage nach der dem Heiligen Geiste eigentümlichen Funktion in der Trinität, bei der Inkarnation und im Gnadenbund, Münster, 1963.

and operation: he comes to us from the very unity of the Father and his dead-risen Son. The Holy Spirit is not only the Breath of Yahweh, but also the breath of Jesus. The wind of the Spirit certainly blows wherever he wishes [8]; but he is breathed forth always by Jesus [9] and is blowing always towards Jesus [10].

Only if we consider both the concrete figure of the Jesus of history (« the man for others », the man who has been free enough to become the neighbour of all men and most so of the poorest, the man who gave up his life for his persuasions about God and man and their relation), and the Risen Christ, who, as the eschatological reality, is above all history, and who, as the giver of the Spirit, draws all things to himself by drawing them into his movement « towards the Father » [11]; only if we consider the identity of this Jesus and this Christ, can we understand, and also undertake, the gigantic task of evangelizing the world. God has manifested himself in the concreteness of the man Jesus, his way of life and his way of dying. This Jesus has been raised from death, to be constituted Christ and Lord of all [12]. As the Omega of the universe, he draws all and each one towards that love, which constitutes his risen and eternal being. This love has been lived out and realized once and for all by Jesus of Nazareth, whose words therefore never will pass away and whose figure never will fade. It is the same one who has suffered under Pontius Pilate and who has been raised by the Father: that love, which is now the focal point of the universe, is nothing but the eternity of that paroxysm of love which came to its completion when Jesus bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

[8] *Jn* 3, 8.
[9] *Jn* 20, 22.
[10] 1 *Cor* 1, 12-16.
[11] *Jn* 13, 36; 14, 12; 16, 5. 16. 28; 20, 17. Cf. also « pros » in *Jn* 1, 2 and « eis » in *Jn* 1, 18.
[12] *Acts* 2, 36; 10, 36.

THE QUESTION OF THE EXTENSION OF THE TWO WAYS OF DIVINE SELF-COMMUNICATION

But in order to reach a fuller understanding of the task of evangelization, we have still to consider a further question: what is the extension of the objective revelation through the Son and the extension of the subjective attraction through the Spirit? The question about the extension of the objective revelation through the Son involves quite a number of problems turning around the question: when and how does this revelation, really and in an existentially relevant way, reach human communities and individual people? We cannot enter here into all these questions. Let us consider rather the second question about the extension of the subjective attraction through the Spirit. This question has received very different answers during history and is hotly debated even today.

1. According to a strong current of tradition, appearing both in the Bible and in christian tradition, the sphere of the proclamation of the objective christic revelation and the sphere of the subjective gift of the Spirit, which draws men to faith, love and hope, coincide. When and where the public, objective revelation of the Lord is given, proclaimed, and testified, there, and only there, the Spirit draws men to an act of supernatural loving faith. Romans 10, 13-15 is the classical text for this view: « Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on him, if they have not believed? And how can they believe, if they have not heard the message? And how can they hear, if the message is not preached? And how can the message be preached, if the messengers are not sent out? »

During the history of theology various conceptions have appeared, which underscore this point. Already in Scripture and during the whole of Antiquity and the Middle Ages demonology has been an important frame of reference for understanding the reality of salvation [13]: man is under the tyrannical rule

[13] *Col* 1, 13 is but a summary of a doctrine which pervades the whole New Testament. Paul's theology on « hamartia » in the Letter to the Romans also can be best understood on this demonological background. For the doctrine of the Fathers, cf. *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, III, 174 ss.

of the Powers of Darkness, which draw him inevitably to sin, death and hell, unless he is liberated by the Stronger One. This Stronger One is Christ, and it is the real contact with his name, the acceptation of his patronage, the receiving of his seal of possession through baptism and the real presence in us of his bodily self through the Eucharist, which save us from the spheres of darkness and maintain us within the sphere of the life-giving Spirit.

Another conception, underscoring the same point, works rather with juridical concepts [14]: man has incurred a state of just condemnation on account of original and personal sin; he can be only pardoned by reference to the merits of the One Innocent: Christ. The conditions for the transfer of these merits have been laid down with supreme wisdom freely by God: these conditions comprise the acceptation of Christ through an explicit act of faith and the reception of his sacraments. It is on these conditions that we can become « one Spirit » with him.

A third conception insists on the objective force of Truth and Reality [15]. Man's spiritual operations, as faith, knowledge, love, etc., constitute on objective contact with reality. Subjective good faith is not enough. If one's persuasions are false, if one, for instance, invokes inexisting gods, his efforts are in vain. Only if one is attached through a spiritual act of faith, understanding, love, etc. to the one saving reality, who is Christ, will Christ's life-giving energies work in him.

Thus, though the frames of reference are various — and others could still be found —, the conception according to which the scope of the spreading of objective revelation and the scope of the bestowal of internal justifying grace coincide, has been — and is still — widely held in christianity and has found its expression in numerous official pronouncements [16].

[14] In late Jewish thought the idea of « Fremdverdienst » was very important. God is asked to « remember » the merits of the fathers and to show mercy to their unworthy sons. The Western theology of the Redemption has been especially strongly marked by this tendency, as we can see in the Soteriology of Pope Leo and in the famous theories of Anselm.

[15] Cf. vg. Origen's explication in his Homilies on the Leviticus, h. 3, n. 8 (*GChrSchr* VI, 315) about the offering of a true faith, through which we can buy the one victim, whose blood makes us clean.

[16] Cf. vg. the Council of Florence, *DS* 1347, 1351, etc.

2. There exists, however, amongst Christians, also a quite different view about the extension of the sphere of influence of the Spirit [17]. This second view is based on the pronouncements of Scripture about the universal saving will of God (Wisdom 11, 21-12, 2; 1 Tim 2, 3-6, etc.), and the universal saving efficacy of Christ's death and resurrection (2 Cor 5, 14-15; Jn 3, 16-17, etc.). This view too insists on the connection between the mission of the Son and the mission of the Spirit: it is on account of Christ's paschal mystery, that the Spirit of God is filling the earth. But according to this view the effusion of the Spirit is absolutely universal, so that each man at any moment of his life is affected by the dynamic presence of the Spirit of Christ in such a way, that if he freely accepts his life as a mystery based ultimately on infinite mercy and opens himself unconditionally to this love by shattering his egoism and accepting absolute responsibility for his neighbours, this act is an act of supernatural faith and love. Such a man, even if he never heard of Christ, is joined by this act to the saving paschal mystery.

This view, now widely spread within the Catholic Church, springs from a number of roots, some of them more solid than others. Its strongest basis is the general image of God, which is shown forth by Christ's existence and preaching. The idea that the majority of mankind has never been given a chance to reach God, man's only beatifying end, does not fit well with this image.

Another, much more questionable but no less effective root of this conception is modern man's repugnance to admit concrete interventions of God in the created world. God is still admitted as the transcendental ground of Being and as the transcendental horizon of man's decisions. This God is also conceived as a gracious God, i.e. as always in the attitude of reaching out to man and accepting his commitment. But the idea, that God bestows at certain moments new and various « graces » to man's heart, is regarded as anthropomorphic and mythological. Such a repugnance might be legitimate, as a reaction to an exaggerated « miraculism », which still pervades too much of christian thinking and action. But if it is absolutized, it would lead by its own logic to a complete denial of

[17] This view has been exposed in various writings by Karl Rahner. They are too well known to be quoted here.

the basic persuasions of Christianity. Christian faith is founded — as modern biblical theology rightly insists — on the free acts of God, which affect the world of space and of time. When God acts, something « new » happens: the word of God « falls » on the prophet; the Word of God takes flesh in the womb of Mary; Christ is raised from the grave; the Holy Spirit is breathed by Christ on and into his disciples; bread and wine become the Body and the Blood of the Kyrios; a new heaven and a new earth will come, in which justice dwells. There is certainly a tendency today to deny the factual (ontological, personal) reality even of all these events, but what remains then would be a « Christianism » so void of reality, that it would cease to be a source of force and life in human history. If, then, Christianity professes a God, whose saving operation is always free and new, and affects personally his partners, then the conception of divine grace, as a kind of ocean, engulfing all men at all moments of their life in the same way, does not fit well into the picture. Moreover, in this conception the whole tragic description of Paul about man in the bondage of evil and unable to extricate himself from the sway of sin [18], must be interpreted as a mere abstraction, a kind of « as if »: man would have been in this predicament, if the grace of Christ would not have been always with him. Such an interpretation hardly does justice to the intentions of the Apostle.

3. As the first and the second view encounters such serious difficulties, there is a need of a third, more balanced, view. I think that such a view could be based on the dialogical structure of human existence and divine salvation. No dichotomy should be made between man's interior and exterior, between man as an individual and man as a partner in community. Man's awakening to his personality, to his responsibility, to real knowledge and love, etc., is made possible through bodily encounter with the « other ». It is for instance through the mediation of the existence of the beloved, through his personality, his interest showed to me, his eyes resting on me, etc., that I am stirred to love and raised to a level of existence and activity, which I never could have reached by myself, by introspection, by mere will-power, etc. Justification — says Bernard

[18] *Rm* 7, 7-24.

Lonergan — is « a supernatural falling in love with God » [19]. Its structure can therefore be conceived through the analogy of a human encounter of love. In Christ's existence, in his words, deeds, etc., God himself declares us his unfathomable love; and it is He, personally, who continues to make this declaration whenever the Gospel reaches — in whatever form — man. Even in a human encounter of love it is not only through the reading and interpretation of external signs, but also through some mysterious direct contact from heart to heart, from soul to soul, from mind to mind, that the words and signs are fully apprehended, understood, appreciated and believed. Even more so in the case of God's declaration of love: he who has showed forth to us the reality of absolute and unconditional love in Christ, makes « his light shine in our hearts, to bring us the light of knowledge of God's glory, shining in the face of Christ » (2 Cor 4, 6). As the story of each love, so the story of God's love too has its « hours of grace », its « *kairoi* ». These are the moments of visitation, the moments when the Lord standing before our door is knocking (Apoc 3, 20), « the hour to receive God's favour, the day to be saved » (2 Cor 6, 2), the moments when the fundamental option for God becomes possible and imperiously demanded. The encounter of any man with the witness of evangelization is for him such an « hour of grace ». We can apply to it the words of Pope Gregory the Great: « When the words of exhortation precede, then the Lord comes to the dwelling place of our heart. » [20] Not in the sense that each such contact would necessarily be the moment of an invitation to a radical conversion. The ways of both human and divine love are much more delicate and intricate. The first contacts might only cause a light stirring of the Spirit. But some day the hour of decision comes, either as a sudden flash, or as an imperceptible penetration of some « kindly light ». And one day man discovers himself as « believing the love which God has for us » (1 Jn 4, 16), in Jesus Christ, his Son, and as giving himself up to this love.

The encounter with God's revelation in Christ is therefore a process which implies the « hour of grace », or leads up to it.

[19] B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, London, 1971, pp. 288 ss. Cf. also B. Lonergan, *Doctrinal Pluralism*, Milwaukee, 1971, pp. 26-27.
[20] *Homilia 17. in Evangelia*, n. 2.

Are there also other « hours of grace », even for those, who, without their fault, did not have an existentially meaningful encounter with christian revelation? In the light of what Christ has showed us about the heart of God, who is « merciful and good to the ungrateful and the wicked » (Lc 6, 35-36), and in the light of the doctrine of Vatican II (LG 16, GS 22), we have to say: yes. We should even admit joyfully that the Risen Christ, by his position as a center of cohesion of all things, affects in some way all men born into this world. No one is completely outside of his sphere of influence. But it would be rash to conclude from this, that each instant of man's life is equally an « hour of grace », and that, in consequence, at each moment of his life, supposed that he wills, he can be reborn as God's child in Christ and the Spirit. The moments of making a new basic option by which man decides, on the deepest level of his freedom, the whole outlook of his life, are, by their very nature, few decisive and culminating moments in human life and God alone — and to a very imperfect extent, the individual involved — knows when such an option becomes possible and does occur. On account of what we have said on the dialogal character of man, we can reasonably say, that the encounter with the « naked, unprotected face of the other man » [21] can become that mediation, through which, when God wills, the commanding invitation to an absolute, unconditional, self-sacrificing love, as grounded in an Infinite Mercy and embracing all men is intimated to us. The « little ones », hungry, thirsty, naked, imprisoned: they are the ones through whom a saving encounter with Christ might occur. How and when: this is a mystery. A few spontaneous acts of sympathy, a temporary engagement in social work, etc., are not yet necessarily signs showing that the basic encounter and option has already occurred. For many people it will be, may be, the hour of death, when the many faces of men to whom — prompted by the Spirit — they have given themselves in particular acts of devotion, will coalesce into the one Face of the Son of Man, who meets them in this definite encounter.

[21] Cf. Emanuel Lévinas, *Totalité et infini.* Essai sur l'extériorité, Le Hague, 19.

The meaning of evangelization according to the three views about the extension of the working of the Spirit

Amongst the three views regarding the scope of the workings of the Spirit it is this third one that seems to us preferable. But as each of the above said views has its proponents in contemporary theology, let us examine the meaning of evangelization according to each one of them.

1. In the first view this meaning and importance is absolutely evident: evangelization is *the* event of grace, both in its external aspect and in its force to mediate the grace of faith and conversion. The proclamation of the Gospel — in whatever way it occurs — is the ray of light flashing through darkness, is the outstretched hand lifting up the drowning victims of an universal shipwreck. One can well understand the burning zeal of missionaries who were, or are, persuaded of the rightness of this view. Their zeal should not be ridiculed or despised as « anthropocentrical ». If « the glory of God is living man », if the specific feature of the Christian is his participation in God's love for men, if the universal love for men is the basic religious act of Christianity, then a missionary zeal, springing from the persuasion to be used by God as the instrument of the greatest possible benefit bestowed on men, is a most holy one. As God has not revealed anything definite about the ways in which he distributes his graces, and as the great saints and theologians of the past have held this position, those who do not hold it (and I am one of them) should not patronize and belittle those who do.

2. In the second view the urgency of evangelization appears, at first sight, less convincing. In fact, in the wake of the spreading of this view, today a certain slackening of evangelizing fervour is seen. Appeals to the positive precept of Christ, to the will of God, to his glory, etc., do not seem sufficient to kindle all the energies required for the fulfillment of this enormous task.

A simple consideration, however, could shed much light on this problem: we have to *distinguish between « possibility » and « realization »*. Sometimes the explanations about the uni-

versal offer of divine grace give the impression as if all people, or at least the great majority of them, would have already accepted this grace, would have been converted and would be living in faith and love, according to the pattern which we can see in Jesus. But by giving just a look to human history and to contemporaneous society, we are overwhelmed by the evidence that this is not so. Of course, Jesus forbade us to judge individuals. But this does not prevent us from seeing the enormous sway that lust, pride, falsity, indifference, injustice, violence, etc., had and has over this world. Many are those who live without God, without hope, without love in this world — both, alas, amongst christians, and amongst people of other religions or no religion. If the Spirit is drawing all of them continually to absolute love, we must sadly admit, that many of them are resisting to this attraction. It is at this point that we must remember our collective responsability and solidarity. Nobody believes just for himself, nobody loves just for himself. Faith, as a living flame, wants all to burn; love, as a friend of life, wants all to love and live. The man who believes and loves is a joy-bearer: he must become a joy-bringer. Christians know how much they are helped in reaching faith and deepening it, in discovering love and increasing it by the memory of Christ, by his words, by his example, by the celebration of his Supper. Seeing around themselves a world, brimful with the mystery of evil, they cannot but wish to be the collaborators of divine grace. They know that the Gospel of Christ will be for so many people the catalyzer, which brings to a head the fundamental option, inspired by the Spirit.

The thought, that such an option would be possible even without the help of our solidarity, should by no means diminish the urgency of the task. Certainly, it is possible that in an epidemic people will be cured by the vigour of their nature. But which doctor is prevented by this thought from giving all his energy to the curing of the diseased? Certainly, it is possible that students attain full knowledge and perfect truth through the innate energies of their mind. But which teacher would think, that because of this his efforts are superfluous? Certainly, it is possible that children arrive at the just distinction between good and evil through their synderesis and follow the good on account of its attraction. But which mother would think, that this exempts her from the responsability of educating her children? The basic principle of human solidarity is not suspended in the spiritual sphere: on the contrary, it is there that it has its greatest intensity and its most important application.

Certainly, according to this view, some, and may be, even many people are already converted, « anonymous christians » before they meet christian revelation. It should not be denied that such people exist. Elements of the Logos and traces of the divine Spirit can be discerned also in non-Christian religions and as far as those religions possess these traces, they will be a help for man to recognize and follow the divine promptings of the Spirit. We should not think, that we christians have all and others have nothing; or that we, and we only have the « supernatural » while others just have the « natural »; or again, that we have all the light, and the others are encircled only by darkness. But we must acknowledge with a humble faith, that we know the Origin of all Light and all Grace by name, while others, even when enlightened by its rays and embraced by its grace, do not know it in this way. Christ died for our sins and has been raised for our justification: this is the Origin of all the workings of the Spirit. Therefore it is but just, that even those non-christians, who have already been united by the Spirit to the paschal mystery of Christ, should know their supreme benefactor, should know that he died for them, should learn to thank him, should learn that « love and its work remain for ever » (GS 39). Evangelization, if it is authentic, will not appear as the presentation of a heterogenous system, but as the « name » and the explanation of the deepest and best aspirations, which are experienced by man [22].

Therefore, even though Christians can rightly help people belonging to other religions to deepen and render more authentic the grasp of those basic truths, which are expressed in their own religions, this can never be the main purpose of evangelization. Though recognizing gratefully everything which is good in other religions, ideas and movements, though thanking « the Father of lights from whom every good gift comes » (Jac 1, 17) for all his gifts He has bestowed on any man, though rejoicing even in the smallest step which our neighbours make towards

[22] Cf. *Acts* 17, 22-31.

the Source of light, Christians can never acquiesce to an interruption of this journey: Christ is the Way, and the world will come to a rest only, when it is finally taken into the immediacy of this relation to the Father (« pros ton Patera »).

3. Thus, I think, it is clear, that even in this second view, christian evangelization maintains its basic meaning. But this meaning becomes still clearer in the third view, which seems to us to be the right one. Certainly, as God wills the salvation of all men, there will be several « hours of grace » in their life. Some of these « hours » may have come long before they first encountered the Gospel. Sometimes missionaries have the overwhelming impression, that some of their catechumens have been « converted » long before asking for instruction: the ease with which they accept the Gospel and rejoice in it can be explained only by the fact, that they have been already those « children of God » whom now Christ is just « gathering together ». In many cases, however, such « hours of grace » have not come yet, or have been neglected, rejected . It is quite possible that people in such a situation — though never completely deprived of some stirrings of the Spirit — will find themselves in the position described by Romans, ch. 1, 2 and 7. An encounter with the Gospel will be for such people a new beginning, leading up eventually to a decisive « hour of grace ». It is the Risen Lord who comes to men in his word, written in the Gospel, spoken by his apostles, shown forth by his witnesses; it is the Risen Lord who comes to men under the figure of shared bread and wine. And this coming, precisely because it is the coming of the Risen Lord, who is in the bosom of the Father and at the very root of all existence and who is universal openness in the life-giving Spirit, touches graciously the deepest level of man's heart and constitutes the self-communication of God in his Son and in his Spirit.

The role of evangelization and the sacraments

This has brought us already to the second problem of our article: the problem of the sacraments. I hope, that from our explanation the meaning and importance of evangelization has been grasped. But precisely on account of this meaning

there arises the question: if man is justified and saved by hearing, believing and living the Gospel, why then the sacraments?

The duality of salvation through faith and salvation through the sacraments appears since the very beginning of the christian tradition. During the public life of Jesus, the Lord requires only faith and conversion for entering the Kingdom; but at the last supper he institutes the memorial rite of the New Covenant and after his resurrection he sends out his apostles with the command to baptize all nations in his name. Paul repeats with great insistence his doctrine on justification by faith; but stresses with equal force the christifying efficacy of baptism and the Lord's Supper. For the Fathers faith in Christ is the very first step which brings us into the realm of the beloved Son, but they insist even more on the efficacy of baptism and the eucharist: in baptism we pass from the darkness of Egypt to the light of the Promised Land; in the Eucharist we partake the Risen Body of Christ, without which there is no resurrection, no life. The Middle Ages, in accordance with the objectifying (« verdinglichende ») tendency, proper to the thought pattern of the Germanic people [23], the objective, « physical » efficacy of the sacraments has been stressed even more strongly.

Of course, neither the Fathers, nor the Scholastics forgot the absolute necessity of personal faith and subjective conversion for salvation. But they were not able to find an organic way for uniting the moments of personal faith and of sacramental efficacy in this process. The connexion which they established has been often a somewhat external one: faith is the « disposition », necessary for the fruitful reception of the sacraments; the well-disposed receiver does not put an impediment (*obex*) to the workings of the sacraments; grace itself, then, is produced in the soul directly by God through the efficient instrumental causality (often called « physical causality ») of the sacramental rite, without passing through personal religious acts of the receiver. As grace was conceived in the Middle Ages mainly as « created grace », the objectifying conception (« verdinglichende », « chôsifiante ») of sacramental causality became even more pronounced.

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[23] Cf. the excellent study of Alexander Gerken, *Theologie der Eucharistie*, München, 1973.

Of course, there have been also some endeavours of a more organic conception. We can mention, for instance, the very interesting conception of Origen on « baptismal faith »[24]. If I understand him rightly, Origen says the following: true faith is a complete adhesion of man to the true intention of God, revealed through Christ. This adhesion can be realized only in the Spirit. In his resurrection Christ has reached, in his humanity, the stage of the Spirit and it is through a contact with this risen Christ, that the apostles have been brought to a true, spiritual faith. Therefore, as the Gospel of John says, it was at the moment of Christ's resurrection that the apostles believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had said. Before this moment the Gospel does not say that they believed. For the apostles, then, it was their meeting with the risen Christ which brought them to spiritual faith. For the other Christians it is, according to Origen, baptism. At baptism Christians participate in the « mystery of the third day », participate in Christ's resurrection and receive thus a beginning of their own resurrection. Thus, through the contact with the Risen Lord, given through Baptism, they are enabled to reach « baptismal faith », i.e. a faith adhering, with full persuasion, by the virtue of the Spirit, to the intention of God. Thus they become children of God.

Another attempt in the same direction is Thomas Aquinas' explanation of the effect of sacramental absolution: « through the power of the keys, attrite man becomes a contrite one », i.e. by the grace, mediated through the sacrament, attrition is personally deepened and becomes contrition[25].

Nevertheless, the main trend of Patristic and Scholastic theology did not avoid, as we have said, the danger of a one-sided objectivism, which made it difficult to conceive how the roles of evangelization, faith and baptism were organically united. Protestantism has been an equally one-sided reaction to this trend. For Luther the pole of subjective faith-experience becomes so overwhelmingly important, that the objective order of salvation, incarnate in the Christ-Event and mediated by the

[24] We have exposed this point in our *La paternité de Dieu chez Origène*, Paris, 1960, pp. 177-186.

[25] Cf. M. Flick, *L'attimo della giustificazione secondo S. Tommaso*, Analecta Gregoriana XL, Roma, 1947.

Church, looses its weight. A latent tendency of monophysism in Luther's Christology has been often pointed out; his extolling the « word » against the « sign » points in the same direction; his reliance on private judgment against the « multitude and magnitude of those who have been mistaken », that is, against the objective witness of Church-tradition, is a further indication in the same sense. The all-importance given to the subjective, individual pole has finally reached its logical conclusion (which Luther, of course, would have abhorred) in the recent theologies of radical demythologization (Bultmann) and de-kerygmatization (Buri), where the existential decision of faith without any objective content (the Incarnation of the Son, the reality of his atoning death, his resurrection which really happened) is alone important, and in the « Churchless Christianity Movement » of Kanzō Uchimura[26], where all institutional elements of the Church, all ministry, etc., are rejected, the sacraments (baptism included) are optional and the only thing stressed is faith and obedience to God's word.

Of course, we should never forget, that the main intention of Luther and of the whole movement of the Reformation, was the will to be faithful to Christ and his Gospel: therefore this movement has in itself a structural element of self-correction: aspects of the Gospel which, on account of the one-sided emphasis of the Reformers, conditioned by their historical situation, have been neglected, reappear and impose themselves on the minds of Christians. This is precisely the basis for ecumenical hope. But in order to promote such an ecumenical understanding, it is necessary, that Catholics find a better balance between the word and the sacrament, than has been the case in most of Patristic and Medieval theology.

[26] Kanzō Uchimura (1861-1930) is one of the most prominent figures in the modern history of Japan's Christianity. An ardent believer of Christ, whom he learnt to know through Protestant missionaries, he found the narrowness and exclusivity of the christian churches repellent. The « Mukyokai » (No-Church or Churchless) Movement, which derives from him, has been and is still an important, though limited, group amongst Japanese Christians, to which many intellectuals and some very fine Scripture-scholars belong, and from which also a charismatic, more popular branch has derived. The Western reader can find more information in Carl Michalson, *Japanese Contributions to Christian Theology*, Philadelphia, 1960, pp. 18-34 and Mitsuo Miyata, *Der politische Auftrag des Protestantismus in Japan*, Hamburg, 1964, pp. 52-95.

The approach, which in to-day's theology seems to be the most promising for an understanding of the function of the sacraments, is the one based on the idea of *personal, symbolic causality*. The famous statement of Pope Leo I is often quoted by modern theologians: « What was visible in Christ, has passed over into the sacraments of the Church »[27]. It is the Risen Lord, who, with his Spirit, encounters man through the sacramental rite performed in his name, in order to draw man into his movement « towards the Father » (« pros ton Patera »), which is at the same time essentially a movement of mission and openness towards all our neighbours. The sacrament is Christ's embrace of his brother; Christ's invitation to the fraternal meal of God's household; Christ's own word of forgiveness; Christ's cleaning touch. It is performed by the mediation of the Church, his body, in the virtue of his Spirit. The Church, through her efficacious prayer, accepts the receiver of the sacraments into the community of faith and love, which is the place of the presence of God, of Christ, of salvation.

The symbolic action, specified in its transcendental, christian meaning by the word of faith, realizes what it expresses: the unity of Christ and the Christian in the One Spirit of the divine agape, soul of the Church. Thus sacraments recall continually to our memory the one basic truth of christianity: it is not we who have saved ourselves and who could boast of it; it is God who loved us first; we are, live and act, not « on our own » (this would be precisely the basic lie, cf. Jn 7, 18, etc.), but « from the Father », through Christ, in the Spirit.

This personal, symbolic causality of the sacraments *does not act outside of man's believing, loving and hoping subjectivity*. The immediate effect of the sacraments is an external-internal, objective-subjective, sensible-spiritual invitation to a more basic faith, a more fervent love, a more patient hope. Man has to make these supernatural promptings his own by believing more completely, loving more unselfishly, hoping more firmly. It is through this personal-spiritual participation, and to the degree of it, that his ontological union with Christ and his love in the Spirit is habitually deepened and intensified (or, to use an

[27] *Sermo* LXXIV, 2 (PL 54, c. 398).

expression of scholastic theology: « his sanctifying grace is increased »)[28].

Beside the sacrilegious reception of sacraments (i.e. a reception without the will to believe in Christ and/or to be united with his love), and the permanently fruitful reception of the sacraments (i.e. a reception through which an increase of faith, love and hope and thus a deeper union with Christ in the Spirit is reached), there exists a third kind of reception: i.e. the recipient has made his basic option for Christ and has the intention to deepen and broaden this through the reception of the sacrament, but in fact, though he is moved by sacramental (actual) grace to such a deepening of his commitment, he does not personally reach a greater intensity of believing, loving and hoping union with Christ, the Father and his neighbours. In this case his « sanctifying grace » does not « increase ». Already Thomas Aquinas' theology of merit has rightly insisted on the strict correspondence between the intensity of « devotion, fervour » and the intensity of habitual grace[29]. It has been the great

[28] The case of those who receive a sacrament without having the psychological possibility of human acts, as it is the case in infant-baptism, should not be treated as the main pattern for understanding sacramental causality, but rather as a legitimate borderline-case. Sound theology demands from us not to base our conception of such a central element in Christianity, as the sacraments, on considerations about a case on which no directly revealed data are available. Such a borderline-case, the legitimacy of which is assured by the multisecular custom of infant-baptism, has to be explained by an analogical application of the principles, which we have exposed above. In fact the structure of infant-baptism and adult-baptism does not differ essentially: even in the case of infant-baptism personal faith, love and hope of the baptized person is necessary for his salvation; the difference lies only in the fact, that in this case there exists a span of several years between the reception of the sacrament and its personal ratification. If this ratification is rejected, the saving effect of baptism is frustrated.

How should the immediate gracious effect of infant-baptism be conceived exactly? It is well known, that during the Middle Ages different opinions were held on this question. Since the Council of Trent the opinion has become common, that the grace received through infant-baptism is exactly the same as the one received by an adult convert baptized. This opinion needs, however, further investigation. At least the thomistic distinction between « collatio gratiae » and « acquisitio gratiae » should be applied to this question. On account of the prevenient love of Christ for the little-ones, the Spirit is « conferred » on them through baptism, but they « acquire » this Spirit, i.e. they make the Spirit personally their own, when, under its motion, they make the fundamental option of loving faith.

[29] I. II. q. 114, a. 8, ad 3m; II. II. q. 24, a. 6, ad 1m. « Devotion » or

merit of E. Schillebeeckx to have applied this principle also to sacramental theology, and to have thus integrated organically the personal element into the sacramental efficacy of grace [30]. (Going one step further, one could also ask, if the connection between the « degree » of habitual grace and personal « devotion » is so strict, that a slackening of our love would also bring with it a diminution of the intensity of our habitual union with God. In traditional scholastic theology this has been denied. But it seems logical to affirm it [31]. If we are right in this affirmation, then we can find a reason for the frequent reception of sacraments (mainly of communion) which the Church encourages, even if, realistically speaking, there is not much hope of raising ourselves to a higher degree of basic devotion, than we had at the great moments of our spiritual life: the promptings of grace and our — even remiss — personal seconding them will in this case efficaciously prevent the gradual weakening of our habitual union with God.)

The great merit of such a conception of the sacramental causality consists in the fact, that — as we have already mentioned — it organically unites the objective, incarnational, paschal, communitarian aspect of salvation with its subjective, spiritual, individual, personal aspect. Salvation is not a subpersonal, natural, physical process, but neither is it only a mere encounter of my subjective, individual personality with the transcendant God: it is the unitive encounter with the transcendent God who has become immanent in Christ and in the Spirit: « the Son of God has become son of man, in order that the sons of men might become sons of God » [32], « divine in-humanation leads to human divinization » [33], man is drawn into the « pros ton Patera » movement of the Son, which is realized in Christ's life, death and resurrection, proclaimed through the

« fervour » in this context should not be understood as a superficial emotion, but as the basic intention of loving faith. Ignatius of Loyola used to define this « devotion » as « promptness in the service of God ».

[30] Eduard Schillebeeckx, *Christus sacrament van de Godsontmoeting*, Bilthoven, 1959, ch. 5, n. 2.

[31] I found this affirmation in the roneo-typed notes of the late Fr. Anton Drexel, S.J., Professor of Dogmatic Theology at the Pontifical Faculty of Dalat, Vietnam, a man of encyclopedical knowledge and of great personal piety.

[32] Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* III, 19, 1.

[33] Maximus Confessor, *Questiones ad Thalassium*, n. 22.

Gospel, tendered to us by the personal-symbolic self-gift of Christ through the sacraments in his Church, made personally ours through a joining of our being, in faith, love and hope, to the being of Christ, so that we might become, more and more, « one Spirit », and finally the God of Love might become everything in all things.

Such a conception of the sacraments leads also to a reconsideration of the usual scholastic division between « sacramental » and « non-sacramental » graces. I would say that *all graces are sacramental.* The sacramental sacrifice of the Eucharist, offered for the salvation of the whole world, is the perpetual, efficacious expression of the fact, that God's saving will, expressed once and for all in Christ's cross and resurrection, is at work today in the world. Through the eucharistic celebration the christian community exercises in an eminent way the priestly role of grace-mediation, by ministering to the One Mediator. Communion, as the efficacious sign of our unity with Christ and his self-sacrificing, universal love in the Spirit, is the « entelechy », which, even before its reception, exercises its christifying power. No grace, i.e. no self-communication of God in Christ and in the Holy Spirit, is ever bestowed, without being in relation with this Covenant Meal, to which all are invited [34].

Thus appears a further point to be considered about sacramental causality. Theologians have always maintained, that the sacraments are efficacious not only at the very moment of their reception, but also before (« votum sacramenti ») and after it. This working of the sacraments during the time before and after their reception is not an exception, but the rule. The graces for conversion, which lead up to baptism, are already due to the saving will of God in Christ, directed to that individual person, which will be expressed in the efficacious symbol of his baptism. The movement of grace, gathering together a Christian community for the celebration of the Lord's Supper in faith, love and hope, is already a fruit of the Mass which will be celebrated by them. There is a reciprocal causality be-

[34] This can be said also about those, who, without their fault, never receive sacramental communion. The fact that Christ invites us every day until the end of the world to his Table and offers there himself to us under the figure of the bread of Life and the cup of Salvation, is the efficacious symbol of that process of grace, which leads mankind to the eternal Wedding-Feast in the Father's House.

tween the sacraments and the dispositions of the recipients: the sacraments cause — both through their intentional presence in the mind and will of the prospective recipient and through the spiritual graces which they mediate — the worthy dispositions for their reception (of course, always by exciting personal faith, conversion and devotion, as has been explained); on the other hand, worthy disposition allows the sacrament to exert their full efficacity during and after their reception, through the docility of the recipient. As Christ and his paschal mystery are both the fruit of God's prevenient saving will towards mankind, and the cause of its effective execution (men are saved by their christification; made sons in the Son they call in his Spirit: Abba, and thus they live with God's triune life), so the sacraments are the fruit of this same saving will (which has been already fully expressed in Christ's paschal mystery, but is — according to Christ's explicit will and for our benefit — expressed countless times again and again, for each age, each place, every person), and the cause of its effective execution: they are — in various ways, according to their character, the channels of all graces with the Eucharist at their center, from which they all derive their christifying efficacy.

A further consideration will help to grasp this point: man is a communitarian-*social* being, and a *bodily* being. Salvation does not reach isolated, solitary individuals: God acquires for himself a people. The place of intersubjectivity within this people is the place proper to the saving presence of God. Therefore salvation, in its God-willed, full form, is not realized by an isolated, internal act of the individual, but by joining, with body and soul, the one believing, loving, hoping community. « If you declare with your lips 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For we believe in our hearts and are justified; we declare with our lips and are saved » (Rm 10, 9-10). The faith of the heart becomes fully human and real, when it takes the form of confession. And this confession is not a private one, but a joining of our voices to the choir of praise, intoned by the community of believers. Receiving baptism is a bodily profession of faith; it is joining the believing community, with the will to be added to the number of Christ's disciples. It is in this community that faith becomes experientially, and sometimes

painfully, obedience; it is here that love becomes a mutual washing of feet; it is here that hope becomes the spring for a common responsible action for a better world.

In such a conception we can also clearly grasp the connection between evangelization and the sacraments. Evangelization is the permanence of Christ's witness to the love of his Father and to the truth of man. Being an action of the Risen Lord, it is accompanied by his Spirit and leads up to the « hour of grace ». This « hour of grace » is expressed by the sacraments, mainly by the Eucharist, where Christ gives us his personal self, and by baptism, where Christ washes us in order to admit us to his table), in which, through personal, symbolic causality, the grace of christification is offered to man's innermost being. This sacramental offer of grace pervades already the whole process, leading up to the reception of the sacrament: the gracious efficacity of the word of evangelization derives ultimately from the word, incarnate, dead, risen, giving himself to us as our food. In this meal the mutual immanence of Christ and man is signified and realized (Jn 6, 56-57), which, by way of an anticipated effect, has made already the whole process of evangelization, not just human propaganda, but a saving activity of the Risen Lord. Through the reception of the sacraments man joins, in body and soul, the community of Christ's disciples, is admitted to their liturgy and is entrusted with their mission. Thus evangelization leads up naturally to the formation of the sacramental community; the efficacity of God's word of evangelization has its highest concentration in the word of the sacrament, where it is indivisibly united with the symbolic action. It is ultimately by its dynamic ordination to the Eucharist (where the essential grace of the New Covenant: the union with Christ and his love in the Holy Spirit, by a self-communication of the Risen Lord, is signified and effected) that evangelization — and even all the other sacraments — have their christifying efficacy. But all gracious efficacy, either of the word or of the sacrament, works by drawing us freely into a communion of loving faith with Christ, and becomes a permanent reality in us insofar as we are joined by this loving faith to the movement of Christ « towards the Father ».

The difficulties of joining the sacramental community

The reception of the sacraments, which build up the coherent, visible, social body of the Church, is often the cause of a painful rupture in the life of the individual or of the society. While private, personal faith in Christ could well leave man embedded in his natural community and even allow him to participate in some of its religious activities (giving them a personal reinterpretation), baptism, and even more so the weekly gathering around the Lord's Table, makes him a member of a very visible and somewhat separate community, which often appears as a foreign body in the general context of a non-christian culture. Therefore there are numerous people who, though greatly inspired by Christ and seeming to have very good dispositions, nevertheless hesitate to receive the sacraments of christian initiation and to take on themselves the whole doctrinal, disciplinary and social burden of Church membership.

What should be our attitude regarding this problem? First of all it must be clearly stated, that according to the witness of Scripture and the constant witness of Tradition the gathering into a concrete community around the Table of the Lord, united in communion with all other eucharistic gathering around the world, and thus becoming through brotherly unity a sign of the presence of the Spirit of Christ and of his being sent by the Father, is an essential element of the christian economy of salvation. But on the other hand we cannot overlook the fact, that historical contingencies can cause such special difficulties, which obscure this evidence. To give just a few examples, from past and present history: in some cases joining the Christian community has meant to become the tool of a colonizing power, pursuing unjust or worldy aims; in some other cases the concrete christian community of a town is composed by members of a certain social class, and members of another class are not welcome there and cannot feel at home; in some other cases again the concrete christian community at one's dwelling place is by no means a gathering of such disciples of Christ who show forth through their mutual love and unity the unity of the Father and the Son, but a hornet's nest of warring factions, or a club of a self-righteous « elite »; in other cases again, and, alas,

this case is almost universal, at the same place numerous separated christian « churches » cater for adherents, each of these « churches » affirming that they are the only authentic group of Christ's followers and not succeeding for centuries to persuade the other christian groups of the truth of this claim. Many other examples could be added which make it difficult, even for a man of good will, to see his duty. Of course, as it has been the case already in the times of Paul, men, called by Christ and looking only for the Kingdom, should overcome all these difficulties, and Christians around the world should encourage them and help them to do so. But, I think, we should not take towards such seekers of the Truth an attitude of « all or nothing ». Man's heart is much more complicated and the ways of God's grace are much more meandering, than we imagine. The large and undefined crowd of « sympathizers » of Jesus, whose conscience and heart only God knows, should be for Christians not a cause of anger, but a cause for joy and thankfulness. The fact that each year four million Japanese care to buy the Bible is a cause for rejoicing, though only a tiny minority of them find their way to baptism. The fact that christian moral judgments on human dignity, etc., are approved at least in theory by the large majority of today's society, is an important fruit of evangelization and can greatly help men making the right decision in the « hour of grace ». Of course, it is very desirable that the ill-defined group of such sympathizers should come to a clear decision of joining the Church of Christ: what we have said about the bodily and communitarian character of salvation makes this evident. But in order to promote this decision, more than stern rebukes, a thorough reformation of the Christian community itself will help. If the Church of Christ will not appear mainly as an imposing (or threatening) organization, but as the movement of those who have been « surprised by joy », whose life is Christ and whose death is a journey of hope, who are through their very being mirrors of the love of God towards all men, who rejoice in suffering, who can weep with the weeping,who can be happy on account of the happiness of others, who never are selfish, irritable, conceited or proud, whose love never fails, whose leaders are responsible, humble servants, proving their authority through service, whose local and universal unity is a reflection of the unity

of the Father and the Son in the Spirit, then, yes, then the Church will clearly appear to all as the Father's house with its many mansions, where everybody finds his true home as a dear, beloved child and brother. Never will the Church perfectly reach this ideal, but she has always to strive for it. To pray and to act strenuously for the realization of such a Church is, without any doubt, the most important work of evangelization.

Evangelization and spiritual life

R. FARICY, S. J.

The purpose of this study is to consider the process of evangelization insofar as it is directed to the spiritual life. The spiritual life is the Christian life seen from the point of view of the heart, of the interior man, of the inner self. Since Christianity itself is a religion that gives primary importance to interior motivation, to the inner man, evangelization can be considered as directed to conversion of heart, and so as aimed at the beginning and the deepening of the Christian spiritual life. The term « evangelization » will be used to mean « that complexus of activities by which men are led to participate in the mystery of Christ proclaimed in the Gospel. » [1]

Here, then, evangelization will be considered from a particular point of view: as ordered to the spiritual life. But this particular point of view is the central one in a consideration of evangelization. It is not, then, an aspect of the evangelization process that is being treated here, but the heart and center of what true Christian evangelization aims at.

The methodology employed will be that of theological reflection with a view to answering two questions: (1) What is the precise object of evangelization, seen particularly in terms of the spiritual life? (2) What are the conditions that need to be fulfilled for evangelization to be effective? The answers to these questions will be formulated as theological hypotheses. Like any hypotheses, these will be true to the extent that they are coherent, that they make sense in the light of the data available, and to the extent that they are productive of further development and of practical results. The answers to the two questions will be valid to the point that they present a coherent explanation of evangelization as directed to the spiritual life,

[1] *De evangelizatione mundi hujus temporis* (Civ. Vat.: 1974), working document preparatory to the 1974 synod of bishops.

and insofar as they might lead to further reflection and to better evangelization. The method, then, will be that of speculative spiritual theology.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE AS THE OBJECT OF EVANGELIZATION

Essentially evangelization aims to convert the hearts of those being evangelized and to initiate them into the Christian faith commitment. As regards the interior life of the persons being evangelized, the general problem is this: how can God's word be communicated to people effectively so as to create a faith response situation? To communicate God's word is far more than a problem of saying the right words, and it is much more than an intellectual problem.

If evangelization has as its goal conversion to the Christian faith commitment, we might ask what this faith commitment consists of. The faith in question here, as the term « faith » is used in this study, goes beyond intellectual assent. It is not simply the faith that is that supernatural virtue by which we assent to all the truths that God has revealed on the authority of God who can neither deceive nor be deceived. The traditional catechism definition of faith falls short of the faith that is the purpose of evangelization. Here, I am speaking rather of the faith of the New Testament, and especially of the faith of John's gospel. It is the faith that Jesus invites men to have in him. It is not only knowledge or intellectual affirmation; it includes a loving and hoping adherence to Jesus Christ, recognized as Saviour, in the context of the Christian community. Faith is man's response to God's invitation, the acceptance of God's saving love present for us in Jesus in his Church.

The goal of evangelization is to bring persons to encounter Jesus Christ in his Church. The word to be communicated is not simply God's word but God's Word, the person of Christ, the sum and the fullness of God's revelation to man. How can this overall objective of evangelization, to communicate Jesus Christ to people, be broken down into practical objectives? In other words, what is it that must be communicated to people so that they can encounter Jesus Christ in his Church? What is the content of evangelization?

The principal content of evangelization is those processes by which Jesus can be known, loved, and served — those processes by which Christ can be met and adhered to in himself, in his Church, in persons, in experience, in the world. This does not, of course, mean that the propositional content of the Christian faith is unimportant, or that it should not have an important place in evangelization. It simply means that if the purpose of evangelization is to bring people to a faith relationship with Jesus Christ in his Church, then it follows that evangelization must communicate those processes or means by which one can be related in faith to Christ in his Church.

What are the processes by which Jesus Christ can be encountered in his Church? In the first place, evangelization seeks to communicate those processes by which daily life can be understood and valued in the light of Christ, processes by which the meaning of experience can be illuminated by Christ. Another, second set of processes that are important are the processes of Christian community, of living and working together in a Christian way, of finding Christ in others, of giving, receiving, helping, trusting, loving, in a Christian context. A third set of processes are those of prayer, the processes of entering consciously and explicitly into relationship with God, processes of offering, asking, hoping, being sorry, loving, thanking, praising. Included here are the processes of participating in and receiving the sacraments.

But what about the content of faith? What place do the truths of faith hold in evangelization? Their purpose suggests their place, which is to lead people closer to God. The truths of the faith are involved in a necessary and intrinsic way in communicating the processes of meeting Jesus Christ in his Church.

It might be objected that the communication of these sets of processes, and the communication of the truths that go with them, is the objective not so much of evangelization as of catechesis. It is the objective of both. Evangelization and catechesis, from the point of view of the spiritual life, run into one another. They are part of a continuous spectrum, and it is impossible to name a point where the total process of communication changes from evangelization to catechesis. Evangelization merges imperceptibly into catechesis.

How can these processes of encountering Christ in his Church be communicated? What are the conditions of effective evangelization especially as regards the spiritual life? What are the conditions of speaking God's word in such a way that a faith response situation is created? They can be reduced to three general conditions: first, it is necessary that evangelization be *dialogical;* further, God's word must be *addressed,* not simply said, to the hearers; thirdly, God's word must be addressed in a way that is *credible.*

Evangelization and dialogue

Conversion must be understood as God's work, and due to his action. The principal agent of conversion is God. God is present everywhere, actively; he acts in all men. The Spirit of God is, furthermore, present in some way and to some extent in all religions and in every just cause and in every authentically religious and even truly human inclination. In practice, the natural order and the supernatural order are, although theoertically distinct, inseparable and almost always impossible to distinguish in concrete situations. The Pelagian heresy, that man can save himself, has an oblique importance in evangelization; man cannot save himself, nor can he, properly speaking, save others. There is only one Saviour.

The corollaries of this seem clear. God's action must be present for conversion to come about; and God's action is a presupposition of conversion and so of evangelization. « No one can come to me unless he be drawn by the Father who sent me. »[2] Evangelization can work towards creating a situation in which conversion can take place; it cannot itself bring about conversion.

Further, the evidence of God's grace must be looked for, worked with, and built on. Those elements that are already persent in the hearts of the unconverted and that are, in the phrase of Tertullian, « naturaliter christiana, » cannot be rejected; they must be identified and appealed to. This is true particularly of non-Christian religions, which are already, often

[2] *John* 6,44.

in an obscure and completely unnamed way, Christian in some ways or in some tendencies.

This means, of course, that evangelization must begin and continue in dialogue. The paradigm for evangelization is the public ministry of Jesus Christ. As is manifest from the Gospels, Our Lord's encounter with others is a dialogic one, beginning with the greatest respect for the freedom of the other and proceeding gradually, in respectful dialogue, toward greater revelation.

This said, there remain to be considered the two other general conditions of effective evangelization as seen from the point of view of the spiritual life: that God's word be addressed to the hearts of the hearers, and that it be presented as credible, as to-be-believed. The first condition in particular is complex, and will require some discussion and elaboration.

The signs of the times

To communicate God's word is much more than an intellectual problem; it is a complex and practical problem. In the first place, for God's word to be communicated it is not enough that it be spoken; the word must be spoken *to* someone, addressed. This means that God's word should be spoken to people in terms of their own experience. What is involved goes beyond merely intellectual experience. Human experience is broader than that. The problem concerns man's whole stance in the world, his way of experiencing himself, others, the world around him. Evangelization, then, must speak to people in terms of their own experience; it must be incarnate in contemporary culture.

Evangelization is directed to men not in the abstract but as they find themselves in their own historical, social, and cultural context. To evangelize, to announce the message of salvation to others, it is necessary to be aware of the conditions in which those others find themselves, to be aware of their experience at least in a general way. « It is necessary to examine and to identify those social processes and phenomena which can affect a whole generation, a people, or an entire

civilization. »[3] These trends, phenomena, currents reflect the characteristics that mark a particular cultural era; they give expression to man's aspirations; and they modify his existence. These phenomena are the « signs of the times. » It is important that evangelization take into account these signs of the times, that it present God's word in the overall framework of the signs of the times, for only in this way will it be able to address the word of God to people today. But what are the signs of the times? Can they be described in any coherent way with particular reference to the spiritual life?

To begin with, we are witnessing today the growth of a general world outlook that seems to be increasingly universal and that seems to be much more than simply the product of the convergence of various national or regional cultures. There appears to be a convergence of peoples, a kind of world-wide meeting of human concerns that has as its product an international and overall, and growing, point of view. And this, in itself, is a sign of the times. Mass communications are both a cause and a result of this convergence of mankind. Not only radio, television, telephone and cable systems, but especially the international news agencies are important factors. One reads the same news, often with the same interpretations presented through selective reporting, in newspapers all over the world, especially in those areas where there is a free press. Fashions and developments in popular culture spread rapidly and quickly become nearly universal. The same kind of popular music can be heard almost all over the world. Political ideas rapidly become common property through mass communications and through international bodies such as the United Nations and its affiliates. Important events in any part of the world are immediately known everywhere and take on a universal significance. The world is no longer divided into nations so much as it consists, more and more, of blocs of nations. For example, at the U. N. Conference on World Population in Romania in August, 1974, the principal political dialogue was between the developed nations and the less developed nations; they formed two more or less integrated bodies that accepted a common fundamental basis of questions and issues, but that differed in their conclusions.

[3] « Evangelization and Justice, » paper prepared for the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace by S. Virgulin, C. Skalicky, F. Giardini, R. Faricy, *et al*, March, 1974, pp. 1-2.

This growing and increasingly worldwide outlook has certain characteristics; these characteristics are the chief signs of the times. For purposes of brevity and clarity, they will be grouped here into four clusters. Mankind understands itself more and more as a unity, as a collectivity, which is moving into a future for which it is responsible. This *future-orientation* of man and his responsibility gives rise to *crises of hope.* But, as human progress continues, man becomes more the master of nature and tends to interpret his world in secular terms. And, as world society becomes more organized and man becomes more conscious of himself precisely as human and as having a properly human dignity, the question of human *freedom* becomes more important. Future-directedness, crises of hope, secularity, and freedom seem to be, today, the most important signs of the times in terms of which God's word must be spoken if it is to be addressed to contemporary man.

Man today sees himself and society in terms of progress, in terms of moving into a future for which man is responsible, in terms of a world with possibilities for the future, a world-to-be-built. The watchword today is the « new, » whatever is closest to the future. It is the future that draws man, that moves him to grow, to transcend present limitations in the direction of a better future. If evangelization is to address man as he is today, it must deal with real problems, and contemporary man's greatest problem is the problem of the future. God's word, then, somehow, must be formulated in categories that are not static but dynamic, not looking romantically and nostalgically toward the past in the manner of the nineteenth century, nor mired in the existential present in the manner of the Middle Ages, but directed toward the future.

One aspect of the problem of the future is the problem of hope. Hope looks to the future. It gives us the momentum or impetus to take the next step into the future. Without hope, man is paralyzed, turns to despair, drops out. As the future gains primacy in human consciousness, hope becomes more important as that human quality or attitude that is indispensable in order to cope with the future. Faced with his awesome responsibility with regard to the future, man today tends to lose

hope. He sees the world energy crisis, the shortage of natural resources, the lack of food to feed the world, the overwhelming and accelerating increase of the world's population, the recurring crises of the environment. He sees himself, situated in the world, facing his own future and the future of his family, and he feels inadequate to deal with the unknown that the future holds. He loses hope or, more generally, becomes anxious in the face of the future.

Modern man suffers from the general conditions of contemporary existence. He is overwhelmed by immensity, by the seemingly infinite structure of the universe, by the apparently infinite axis of time that stretches back millions of years and that reaches forward indefinitely, by the immensity of the human mass, by the difficulty in communicating with others, by the impersonal blind hostility of large human institutions. And in the face of all this, he is afraid. What is the root of this fear; what is the core of mankind's present unrest and anxiety? Ultimately, it is the fear of death, the fear of personal death and the fear of the death of mankind. It is more than simply fear of the future; it is the fear that there will be no future. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit priest-scientist who so well understood and diagnosed twentieth century anxiety, put it this way:

> Tomorrow? But who can guarantee us a tomorrow anyway? And without the assurance that this tomorrow exists, can we really go on living, we to whom has been given — perhaps for the first time in the whole history of the universe — the terrible gift of foresight?
>
> Sickness of the dead end — the anguish of feeling shut in. This time we have at last put our finger on the tender spot.
>
> What makes the world in which we live specifically modern is our discovery in it and around it of evolution. And I can now add that what disconcerts the modern world at its very roots is not being sure, and not seeing how it ever could be sure, that there is an outcome — *a suitable outcome* — to that evolution. [4]

Mankind is not sure of the future's outcome, nor even that there will be any suitable outcome, any ultimate future. Man

[4] *The Phenomenon of Man,* tr. B. Wall, revised translation (New York: 1965), p. 228. See also, « The End of the Species, » *The Future of Man,* tr. N. Denny (New York: 1964), pp. 298-303.

today is like a miner trapped underground; before he can decide to climb back up the mineshaft, he needs to presuppose two things: that the other end of the mineshaft is open, and that there is light and fresh air on the other side of that opening. It the same way, man today is confronted with the long and painful effort of human progress. That effort cannot be made if there is no hope for an ultimately successful outcome; at present, because the question is just being formulated in our time, hope is uncertain, and the effort is being made but with anxiety, with a weakness of hope in the future. Failures in hope can be expected to be more frequent as man becomes even more conscious of the problem of the future. Man is coming of age, and he is having interior doubts. This is a sign of the times.

A third sign of the times is that of secularity, of the ongoing secularization of man's view of reality. Western culture, and — increasingly — world culture, has undergone and is still undergoing a progressive desacralization of persons and things and, at the same time, a rationalization of thought — the withholding of emotional participation in thinking about the world. This is a continuing process of transformation, a double transformation: of man's way of understanding the world, and also of his way of understanding his relationships with the world. He sees the world less and less as dominated by divine forces and more and more as subject, really or potentially, to his own domination and control. Accompanying this desacralization of man's worldview, there is a progressively objective and unemotional attitude toward the world, a kind of pragmatic and scientific objectivity. Man today sees the world less in sacred terms and more in secular terms; this process of transformation of understanding is called secularization.

As human progress goes on, as man continues to dominate nature, he sees nature and all of reality more in secular terms, as not sacred but secular. This secular and matter-of-fact approach to the world is, in fact, the most important psychological presupposition of human domination of the world. And it is a sign of the times.

Finally, it should be noted that almost everywhere in today's world there is a preoccupation with man himself, with his dignity as a person, with human rights, with the relationship between person and community, and — especially — with human

freedom. There are several levels of concern with man's dignity, rights, and freedom. African liberation movements fight for *political* freedom. Many Latin American countries struggle to be liberated from North American *economic* domination, and throughout the world men seek freedom from the power of multi-national corporations. There is, then, a concern for the freedom of peoples. At the same, there is, in the face of so much contemporary violence against persons, an intense interest in the rights and freedom of the individual person. There are, nearly everywhere, battles being fought for freedom. There are, for example, the black civil rights movement and the chicano movement and the American Indian movement in the United States, the movement in western countries for women's liberation, and the struggle for freedom in Northern Ireland. All of these, seen globally, mark an important sign of the times: man's search for freedom from all that oppresses him and keeps him down, freedom from ignorance, freedom from institutionalized violence, economic and social and political freedom, freedom to be truly human in keeping with man's intrinsic human dignity.

These are the principal signs of the times: progress, lack of hope, secularization, freedom. They indicate what men are searching for in contemporary society; they are the names of contemporary man's aspirations. They give titles to the questions that man is asking today. To be effective, from the viewpoint of man's interior life, evangelization must present God's word in the form of answers to the questions that are in man's heart.

Christianity and the Signs of the Times

The Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, states that:

> ... the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its expectations, its longings, and its dramatic characteristics.[5]

What does the Church have to say to the spiritual questions, the spiritual needs, in the heart of modern man?

Paradoxically, Christianity has given rise to much of the future orientation in present world culture. Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy has written:

> A question about the future of Christianity would be out of order. « The Future and Christianity » is no casual combination of words like « the future of motoring » or « the future of Europe. » Christianity is the founder and trustee of the future, the very process of finding and securing it, and without the Christian spirit there is no real future for man ...
>
> In apparent doubt whether there is still any future in Christianity, people have been demanding in recent years that we save Christianity from destruction ... But « saving » Christianity is unnecessary, undesirable, impossible, because it is anti-Christian. Christianity says that he who tries to save his soul shall lose it. Our supreme need is not to save what we smugly presume to have, but to revive what we have almost lost. The real question is: Do we have a future? Then, we would have to be Christians.[6]

In the Old Testament, God reveals himself to Israel in Israel's history. That revelation is a promise and even a guarantee, an announcement of the promised future. Israel's religion and its relationship with God is covenantal, is based on promise, for covenant means promise. The two central categories of the religion of Israel are convenant and exodus. Both are future-oriented categories. Just as God was in covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Moses, so is he always in covenant with his people, promising them the future. And just as God was with his people in the exodus, leading them to the promised land, so is he with Israel in history, leading Israel into the promised future. God is not « up there » nor « out there, » but « up ahead, » leading his people, going before them into the future that he has promised them. God calls his people into

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[5] *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. W. Abbott (New York: 1966), Introduction, pp. 201-202.

[6] *The Christian Future* (New York: 1966), p. 61.

the future, into the inheritance that he has for them. There is no essential change in the New Testament. In the resurrection of Christ, God has promised to us the future, the world to come. This future is what we are building toward.

The Second Vatican Council, in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium,* brings the Old Testament and the New Testament images of covenant, exodus, and the risen Christ as the head of God's people together.[7] *Gaudium et spes* sees history as moving toward a future goal. The risen Christ is the goal of all history and the future focal point of mankind's progress.[8] Christianity is essentially future-oriented. This future-orientation must be stressed in evangelization.

Also, Christianity alone possesses the ultimate answer to the contemporary question of hope. What are the conditions of hope? What conditions, when fulfilled, make hope in the future possible? Hope has two conditions. First, it must be interpersonal. We hope only in persons, not in things. Hope requires a certain mutuality between persons. Secondly, hope, to exist, must be based on the assurance of an ultimately successful outcome for the future. Hope must be anchored in some guarantee that there is, at the end, a way out of present difficulties. These two conditions of hope in the future: that man's hope be in a person, and that it be in a person who assures man of an ultimately successful future, are fulfilled in, and only in Jesus Christ risen. Christ risen holds man's future firmly in his hands. He is God's pledge to man of man's ultimate future. The risen Christ is the Lord of the future, and the only real and solid ground of man's hope.

The Church's answer to the problem of anxiety about the future, and to the problems of suffering and death, is the cross of Christ directed toward the resurrection. The suffering of the individual person can have meaning as a participation in the redemptive suffering of Jesus, and can be a share in God's work of redeeming the world. The death of the individual person can be a participation in the redemptive death of Jesus, who has made of death a passage to future life. Furthermore, the whole direction of the world's history is toward the death

[7] *The Documents of Vatican II, op. cit.,* chapter two, pp. 24-37.
[8] *Ibid.,* Introduction, p. 208.

and transformation of the world at the end of time. The doctrine of the second coming of Christ and of the end and final transformation of the world has important implications in an age of progress and of awareness of the future. The Church, in its evangelization, must find ways of formulating and presenting the paschal mystery, the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus, in such a way that contemporary man can understand how his everyday life can be a participation in that mystery, a dying and rising with Christ, and in such a way that the whole movement of the world into the future can be seen in terms of a struggling movement toward the world to come.

Given the future-orientation of the contemporary point of view, and the radical need for hope, the cross can no longer be presented, if it ever was, as a symbol of sadness or suppression or defeated resignation. Rather, the cross, ordered to resurrection, must be seen as the answer to the suffering and worries of men. The cross is the true symbol of progress towards the future, a progress that is made with laborious effort and in pain and suffering. The suffering and death of Jesus Christ are not only the model for man; it is Christ's redemptive act that gives meaning and efficacy to man's work of building the world toward the future, in the direction of Christ's second coming. The cross, then, is not only the symbol of what man has to undergo in the way of expiation; it is also, and primarily, the expression of « the creative but laborious effort of mankind climbing toward Christ who awaits it. »[9] The cross is the symbol of progress through difficult labor. In *The Divine Milieu,* Teilhard de Chardin writes:

> Towards the peaks, shrouded in mist from our human eyes, whither the cross beckons us, we rise by a path which is the way of universal progress. The royal road of the cross is no more nor less than the road of human endeavor supernaturally righted and prolonged. Once we have fully grasped the meaning of the cross, we are no longer in danger of finding life sad and ugly. We shall simply have become attentive to its barely comprehensible solemnity.[10]

[9] « Integration de l'homme dans l'univers, » unpublished essay of P. Teilhard de Chardin, written in 1930, p. 13.
[10] Tr. B. Wall *et al* (New York: 1960), pp. 103-104.

What does Christianity, in its evangelization, have to say to the secular dimension in contemporary culture? The problem here is considerable, largely because, although there is much Protestant theology of secularity today,[11] there is very little coherent Catholic theological reflection on the problems posed for Christianity on the increasing secularization of the modern world.[12] Something, however, may be said on the question. For one thing, « secularity » must be distinguished from « secularism. » Secularism is a materialistic view that restricts reality to this material world. It is a form of naturalism that denies the importance and even the true existence of the sacred. Secularity, on the other hand, simply pertains to all that is not sacred without denying the existence and importance of the sacred. The increasing secularization of the modern world can be understood as a gradual and progressive desacralization, or secularization, of areas of the world which are not any longer regarded as sacred. Examples are the secularization of civil government with the clearer distinction between Church and state, the secularization of science with the increasing independence of science from religious thought, and the secularization of nature in the rise of modern science and technology.

The attitude of the Church in the face of increasing secularization should be two-fold. First of all, the sacred must be affirmed. The sacredness of the person as created by and ordered directly to God is paramount; this sacredness is the basis of human dignity and human rights. The sacredness of the Church itself, of its ministry through the word and the sacraments, and of man's relationship with God must be upheld and stressed. But, at the same time, the secular is to be distinguished from the sacred; and the secular order is to be affirmed in its secularity. The whole process of the increasing secularization of the secular sphere has God as its source; as Creator, God makes things to be, to be themselves, and to grow in their own identity and autonomy. God, in his creative activity, makes

[11] See, for example, H. Cox, *The Secular City*, revised edition (New York: 1966).

[12] See, however, B. de Margerie, *Le Christ pour le monde*, (Paris: 1970) especially pp. 158-160; J.-B. Metz, *Theology of the World*, tr. W. Glen-Doepel (London: 1969), pp. 13-55; *The Sacred and the Secular*, ed. M. Taylor (Englewood Cliffs: 1968); and particularly G. O'Collins, *The Theology of Secularity* (Dublin: 1974).

the world to be world, the secular order to be — increasingly in the process of history — secular. The secularization process, therefore, has Christian value. And there exists a Christian responsibility to be involved in the world as world, in the secular order as secular — not somehow to baptize the secular, but to build it on its own terms, as secular.

Lastly, does Christianity have something to say in response to modern man's quest for freedom? This is, of course, one of the major themes of contemporary theology, as evidenced in the Latin American theology of liberation.[13] But even before there was a theology of liberation, from the beginning, Christianity has been a religion of freedom. An important part of the Church's mission, like that of Jesus, has always been « to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom to captives, ... to set the downtrodden free. »[14] *Gaudium et spes* declares that «the Gospel announces and proclaims the freedom of the sons of God, and repudiates all the bondage which ultimately results from sin. »[15] Jesus Christ has freed man and, as St. Paul says, « When Christ freed us, he meant us to remain free. »[16] The truth revealed in Jesus and through his Church makes men free.[17]

In the Old Testament, God frees Israel from political oppression, from « the house of slavery, »[18] to lead her across the desert to the promised land.

> And Yahweh said, « I have seen the miserable state of my people in Egypt. I have heard their appeal to be free of their slave drivers. Yes, I am well aware of their sufferings. I mean to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians and bring them up out of that land to a land rich and broad, a land where milk and honey flow. »[19]

[13] The principal work in this field, already something of a theological classic, is that of G. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, tr. Sr. Caridad Inda and J. Eagleson (New York: 1973). For an overview of Latin American liberation theology, see P. Berryman, « Latin American Liberation Theology, » *Theological Studies*, 34 (1973), pp. 357-395.

[14] *Isaiah* 61, 1.

[15] *Documents of Vatican II, op. cit.*, chapter four, p. 240.

[16] *Galatians* 5, 1.

[17] *John* 8, 32.

[18] *Exodus* 13, 3; cf. *Isaiah* 43, 16.

[19] *Exodus* 3, 7-8.

But Israel herself, by her own infidelity to God, fell victim to a new kind of slavery, but still with a hope to be freed.[20] This hope is fulfilled in Jesus, who « came to save his people from their sins, »[21] and to give his life as a ransom so that men might be freed.[22]

Christian freedom is freedom in the Spirit, interior freedom,[23] but this interior freedom is not unconnected with social, economic, and political freedom. On the contrary, the freedom that Christianity brings is freedom from sin, and sin is often found in the very structures of human society as well as in the hearts of men. Sin within the person has consequences in society, and so it comes about that situations arise which are objectively sinful even though perhaps involving no immediate subjective responsibility at the time that those situations exist. Sinful structures, social, economic, and political, do exist in society; they are objective states of sin. Situations of unjust distribution of wealth, of oppression of various kinds, of starvation, of homelessness, of inhuman living conditions; all these are sinful situations; they have been called conditions of institutionalized violence.[24]

It is, clearly, part of the Church's mission to condemn such objectively sinful societal structures, and to work towards overcoming them. The denunciation of societal injustice and the effort to remedy injustice has a long history in the Judeo-Christian tradition, marked by many Old Testament prophets, such as Amos, and — in the New Testament — by the Beatitudes. Christianity, then, in its evangelization, can and must speak, at several levels, to the hunger for freedom that is so much in the hearts of men today.

Two conditions of effective evangelization, from the point of view of the spiritual life, are that it be dialogical and that it be addressed to men in the framework of the questions that

[20] *Luke* 24, 21.
[21] *Matthew* 1, 21.
[22] *Matthew* 20, 28.
[23] *Romans,* chapters 6, 7, and 8.
[24] See P. Henriot, « Social Sin and Conversion: a Theology of the Church's Social Involvement, » *Chicago Studies,* 11 (1972), pp. 3-18; « Politics and the Priest, » *Commonweal,* 96 (1972), pp. 495-498; « The Concept of Social Sin, » distributed by the Institute of Human Relations, Loyola University, New Orleans.

are in their hearts today. A third condition is that evangelization be credible, that it present God's word in such a way that that word can be understood as to-be-believed-in.

The Church: a sign of credibility

Just as in the spiritual life there is a close and even intrinsic connection between the interior life and its exterior manifestation, so too in evangelization, God's word addressed to men's hearts must be witnessed to by the actions of the Christian community. It is only to the point that the Church lives what it says that it will be believed. Actions speak louder than words. The Church preaches Christ as for-man; and so it is only to the extent that the Church, the extension in history of the Incarnation, is itself for-man that its preaching will be credible.

It is the principle of the Incarnation that matter is the proper vehicle of spirit. The Church, like its founder, is incarnate in the world, subject to the conditions of history, involved in the affairs of man in a healing and freeing way. And the truth that it proclaims is a truth that is to-be-done.[25] The Church is obliged to do the truth that it proclaims. The fact is that evangelization is primarily a function not of individual persons but of the Church, of the Christian community as a whole and in particular of local Christian communities. The life of the Christian community is the most important sign of the credibility of the Church's evangelical proclamation. The First Vatican Council has stated that « the Church itself ... is a great and perpetual motive of credibility and an irrefutable proof of its own divine mission. »[26] This, of course, does not mean that the existence and activity of the Church somehow compels an assent of faith; faith comes only from God. One must distinguish between evident truth and evident credibility. Vatican I maintains that the Church offers the major evidence, not precisely of the truth that it proclaims — for this can be grasped only in faith, but of the *credibility* of the truth. According to Thomas Aquinas, « man cannot believe unless he sees that he

[25] *James* 1, 22.
[26] Constitution on the Catholic Faith, chapter three, in Denzinger's *Enchiridion Symbolorum,* no. 1794.

must believe, either because of the evidence of signs, or because of something similar. »[27] The Church, as a sign to the nations, must make the word of God that the Church proclaims credible; the Church is the chief evidence of the credibility of its evangelical proclamation, the main sign that God's word is to-be-believed by man.

In order that the Church be a credible sign of the believability of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, it must be perceived by men as for men. The Church is perceived by men in its existence in the local churches, in the Christian community present in a particular place at a particular time. It is the local Christian community that evangelizes, and it is the local Christian community that must be an evidence of the credibility of Christianity. To do this, it must not only proclaim the truth but, also, do it. In practice, this comes to being involved in matters of justice and of human development. « To work at the *secular* task, at humanization, is a *religious* task ... It is in the strict sense evangelical. »[28]

> Words have to be made flesh for men to see their grace and truth. The witness to the truth of the word is the action placed at the service of humanity in imitation of Christ. This service consists in turning to man with love as Christ did when he descended into man's world to live and die for him so that, risen, he could become the heart of that world. Evangelization, therefore, essentially requires a service which takes on the shape of the cross as a manifestation and continuation of the « cruciform service » that Jesus took on for mankind.[29]

Theses: This theological reflection on evangelization and spiritual life can be summarized in the form of five theses.

1. From the point of view of the spiritual life, the goal of evangelization is the communication of those processes by which Jesus Christ can be encountered and adhered to in faith, in his Church; these are processes of prayer, of living in Christian community, and of interpreting oneself and one's experience in the light of Christ.

2. The conditions of the effectiveness of evangelization are

[27] IIa-IIae, q. 1, art. 4, *ad secundum*.

[28] P. Land, « Evangelization and Development, » talk to the Irish Mission Society, May 1974, mimeographed, p. 10.

[29] « Evangelization and Justice, » *op. cit.* (reference 3).

that it be dialogical, addressed to men as they are, and credible.

3. All men already have some kind of spiritual life. God is acting, somehow, in all men; and God is the principal agent of conversion. Evangelization must, realistically, presuppose God's action in men's hearts and work with it. Dialogue, therefore, is the beginning of evangelization.

4. The principal signs of the times reflect what is in the heart of contemporary man: his future-directedness, his lack of hope, his secularity, and his search of freedom. These signs must be discerned and spoken to in evangelization in order that God's word be proclaimed to men's hearts.

5. For evangelization to be credible, what the Church does must correspond with what it proclaims.

Evolución histórica del concepto de « Evangelización »

J. López-Gay, S. J.

Nuestra investigación comienza con la nueva época de las grandes misiones del siglo XVI. En la literatura de los primeros autores no aparece el término *evangelización*. Habrá que esperar tres siglos para que este término se ponga de moda y entre dentro del vocabulario teológico misionero. Su uso comenzará dentro de los círculos misioneros protestantes. Encontrará un válido refuerzo en la reflexión teológica ya que el teórico tiende a la abstracción. Se divulgará gracias a los Congresos y movimientos populares, que buscando « consignas » saben acuñar vocablos absolutos. Los primeros misioneros y teólogos hablaban con circunlocuciones y términos más concretos como « anunciar el evangelio, predicar el evangelio, propagar la fe por medio del evangelio », etc.

Más que presentar una lista exhaustiva de autores y de obras examinando en ellos el uso y significado de esta terminología, escogeremos los más representantes. La evolución se nota en un enriquecimiento de las causas y fines de la evangelización. En todo el proceso, un momento clave viene representado por la Conferencia de New York, 1900, del Consejo Ecuménico de Misiones, donde oyéndose aún los ecos románticos del siglo precedente, se habló repetidamente y de una forma explícita de la *evangelización*, esperando que todo el mundo fuese evangelizado en aquella generación. Fue la consagración oficial del término, que venía usándose desde mediados el siglo XIX. Después del primer conflicto mundial se impuso, por razones que estudiaremos, la palabra *evangelismo*, que aportó nuevos matices al concepto de evangelización. Otra nueva etapa comienza con el fin de la segunda guerra mundial, cuando en todas las Iglesias cristianas brotan algunos movimientos radicales que intentan

sacar la evangelizción de su auténtico sentido bíblico y teológico; otras tendencias siguen profundizando su verdadera significación.

* * *

En las primeras bulas pontificias que orientan e impulsan el movimiento misionero dentro del s. XV y comienzos del XVI, encontramos algunas indicaciones interesantes y decisivas en la concepción de la Evangelización. Las intervenciones de la Sede Apostólica obedecían a tres principios: la dirección de la lucha contra el islam belicoso, la autoridad del Papa sobre los miembros de la República cristiana, y la responsabilidad por la expansión de la Iglesia y la misión de predicar el Evangelio [1]. Ya en la primera bula relacionada con el nuevo mundo americano, *Inter caetera* (4 mayo 1493), los móviles de la cruzada contra el Islam, que había ocupado durante tanto tiempo a los Reyes católicos, se proyectan sobre las islas y tierras recién descubiertas. Recuerda el Papa la liberación de Granada del poder sarraceno, y considerando en esta perspectiva la petición de los Reyes, « digne ducimus non immerito, et debemus illa vobis etiam sponte et favorabiliter concedere, per quae huiusmodi sanctum et laudabile, ab immortali Deo ceptum propositum, in dies ferventiori animo, ad ipsius Dei honorem et imperii christiani propagationem, prosequi valeatis » [2]. La fuerza del texto está en ese *proseguir* con ánimo más ferviente el mismo propósito que animó a los Reyes a la cruzada. Y así se propagará el imperio cristiano. Esta perspectiva, pronto desaparecerá de los textos pontificios, quizás no tan pronto de la mentalidad de algunos responsables de la evangelización; y en las bulas se afirmará claramente como motivo de la intervención del Papa, su obligación y responsabilidad de evangelizar el mundo entero [3].

[1] Ch.-M. de WITTE, O.S.B., *Les bulles pontificales et l'expansion portugaise au XV^e siècle*, « Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique », 53 (1958) pp. 456-57; es la conclusión de un largo estudio sobre las intervenciones pontificias en el s. XV, cuyo espíritu y terminología, perseveran en las primeras bulas relativas a América.

[2] F. J. HERNAEZ, *Colección de Bulas, Breves y otros documentos relativos a la Iglesia de América y de Filipinas*, I, Bruxelas, 1879, p. 13, dentro de la Introducción y del primer párrafo.

[3] P. LETURIA, *Relaciones entre la Santa Sede e Hispanoamérica*, I, Roma 1959, p. 182, dentro de un estudio sobre las bulas de Alejandro VI.

En esta primera bula reconoce Alejandro VI, por noticias oídas al embajador de los Reyes, que los infieles recién descubiertos creen en Dios Creador; pero carecen de la fe, necesaria para la salvación, y la fe es fruto de la predicación. (La bula usa dos verbos poco técnicos en el vocabulario misionero: *eruditi, instruere*). La obra de la evangelización viene definida como *reducir* los infieles « ad colendum Redemptorem nostrum et fidem catholicam profitendam ». El Papa anima a los Reyes a emprender esta obra a la que están obligados por el bautismo y por el mandato apostólico, y en este contexto les manda en virtud de santa obediencia « ad terras firmas et insulas praedictas viros probos et Deum timentes, doctos, peritos et expertos, ad instruendum incolas et habitatores praefatos in fide catholica et bonis moribus imbuendum, destinare debeatis » [4]. Este mandato « destinare debeatis » no implica una delegación en los reyes de la misión canónica propria de quien evangeliza. Es verdad que los « levantaba a la esfera de la evangelización al concederles el derecho e imponer la obligación de escoger, enviar, y sustentar a los obreros evangélicos, funciones que desde el s. XIII al s. XV ejercitaron sin intermediarios los Papas y las Ordenes. Y que desde el siglo XVII quedan reservadas a Propaganda » [5].

Dos elementos caracterizan la evangelización en los primeros momentos de la nueva era misional: la conciencia que tiene el Papa de su misión evangelizadora, y la presencia e intervención de los poderes civiles, en concreto los Reyes y su Consejo, en la obra de la evangelización. En las bulas dirigidas a los Reyes apenas si están desarrollados los elementos de una teología de la evangelización, falta una reflexión bíblica, y casi siempre la exposición se mantienen en un plano jurista. Pero el fin espiritual de la evangelización está siempre presente.

¿Cómo exponía el Papa su motivación evangelizadora? Entre los diversos textos escojamos uno de las primeras bulas, *Ineffabilis* (1 junio 1497) al Rey de Portugal: « Ineffabilis et Summi Patris providentia super reges et regna, testante propheta, licet immeriti constituti, offici nostri debitum exsequi tunc nos arbitramur, cum ad ea nostros diffundimus vigilanter co-

[4] HERNAEZ, o. c., I, 12-14, el « reducere ad fidem catholicam » se vuelve a repetir dentro de la Bula.

[5] LETURIA, o. c., I, p. 110.

gitatus, per quae ortodoxae Fidei propagatio, nostrae curae caelitus commissa, ac Christianae Religionis augmentum et animarum salus procurari, ac barbaricae nationes deprimi, et ad sedem ipsam successu temporis converti possint »[6]. El movimiento de evangelización está concebido como « propagación de la Fe, aumento de la religión cristiana, salvación de las almas, conversión a la sede apostólica ». Los dos motivos teológicos que fundamentan la obligación evangelizadora son la misión « encomendada » por Dios al Papa, probable alusión al mandato misionero, y la naturaleza misma del oficio de Pastor supremo, « super reges et regna ». Cuando las primeras bulas van dirigidas a los mismos misioneros, cambian de tono y el concepto de evangelización se enriquece. Por ejemplo, pocos meses después de publicar la primera bula, ya citada, el Papa nombraba con una nueva bula, *Piis fidelium* (26 junio 1493) a Fray Bernardo Boil (o Buyl) vicario de las Indias, y le « encomienda » marchar con otros clérigos regulares o seculares, y los principales ministerios que les impone vienen así enumerados: « verbum Dei predicandi et seminandi, dictosque incolas et habitatores ad fidem catholicam reducendi, eosque baptizandi et in fide ipsa instruendi, ac ecclesiastica sacramenta, quoties opus fuerit, ipsis ministrandi »[7]. Existe una gradación en la obra de evangelización: lo primero « el anuncio de la palabra de Dios » que actuará como semilla, de esta forma se podrá « reducir los infieles a la Iglesia », y por fin no falta la dimensión sacramental, uniendo la predicación con el « bautismo ». Parece distinguirse un segundo ritmo de la evangelización, cuando ya los hombres hayan aceptado la palabra, y bautizados pertenezcan a la Iglesia; entonces, habrá que seguir « instruyendo en la misma fe », y administrando los restantes sacramentos, llamados « sacramentos eclesiásticos ».

Pasemos a la segunda nota que caracterizó la evangelización según los primeros documentos pontificios: la participación e

[6] HERNAEZ, o. c., II, 836.

[7] El texto crítico de esta bula en Al. GARCIA GALLO, *Las bulas de Alejandro VI y el ordenamiento jurídico de la expansión portuguesa y castellana en Africa e Indias*, « Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español », 27-28 (1957-58) pp. 810-814. Un estudio sobre el fraile mínimo B. Boil y de la bula cit. en F. FITA, *Fray Bernard Buyl y Cristóbal Colón*, « Bol. de la R. Academia de la Historia », 19 (1891) 173-233; *Primeros años de Episcopado en América*, ib., 20 (1892) 573-615.

intervención del poder civil en la misma obra de la evangelización. Era un fenómeno nuevo, como indicamos. Fue necesaria una bula de Adriano VI, *Exponi nobis* (10 mayo 1522), conocida como bula *Omnimoda* para delimitar bien los campos de actuación, y explicar el « destinare debeatis » de la primera bula. Se le concedía al Rey y al Consejo el derecho de seleccionar, aprobar y distribuir los operarios evangélicos. El campo estrictamente jurisdiccional quedaba en manos de la Santa Sede y de las Ordenes religiosas: lo superiores debían nombrar, enviar y juzgar de la idoneidad de los misioneros. Esta jurisdicción quedaba moderada siempre por la intervención de la Santa Sede, en cuyo nombre y autoridad marcharían las expediciones de evangelizadores[8]. Todavía las funciones que se les concede a los Reyes y al Consejo eran propias de los superiores religiosos y de la Santa Sede, y volverían, al menos de iure, a estas esferas con la formación de la S. Congregación de Propaganda Fide, en 1622. Pero no podíamos olvidar este elemento como algo característico de la obra evangelizadora del s. XVI[9].

La presencia del poder civil en la obra de la evangelización volvió a plantear un problema antiguo, y fue la ocasión para que teólogos y misioneros profundizaran en el verdadero concepto de evangelización. ¿Podía ir la evangelización acompañada de métodos de coacción? ¿Hasta qué punto eran permitidos ciertos medios violentos a la hora de evangelizar? El teólogo escocés, John Mayr (o Maior) defendía en París hacia el 1520 la licitud de una evangelización coercitiva refiriéndose a los nue-

[8] P. TORRES, *La bula Omnimoda de Adriano VI*, Madrid 1948. El texto crítico del breve (más exactamente que bula), pp. 97-102; una síntesis sobre el contenido expuesto, pp. 116 ss. El título se refiere a la autoridad que el Papa concedió a los misioneros, aún para ejercer actos episcopales que no requerían la ordenación episcopal. La bula afectaba especialmente a la Orden franciscana.

Un ejemplo concreto de cómo se procedía, en la misión de F. B. Boil de quien hemos hablado en la nota anterior: en la bula el Papa reconoce que los Reyes católicos, llenos de deseos de la « salvación de las almas y de la propagación de la religión », « decretaverint te ad partes illas destinare », y así acudieron al Papa, quien accede a los deseos y da la misión canónica a Fray Bernardo.

[9] No entramos en el juicio de este sistema, sin duda providencial, quizás necesario en aquellos momentos, aunque lleno de limitaciones, y que pasado el tiempo crearía más problemas que facilidades. Ver una visión en la larga introducción (pp. 3-210) del P. L. Lopetegui a la *Historia de la Iglesia en la América Española*, Madrid 1965.

vos países descubiertos. Se puede obligar a oír la predicación, y cuando no quieren convertirse o impiden la predicación es lícito el uso de la violencia. Con la autoridad de la Iglesia, la violencia se convertía en un medio de evangelización [10].

La reacción de teólogos y misioneros fue casi unánime. Cada uno añadía nuevos matices. Desde Tomás Vío, Cardenal Cayetano, comentando a S. Tomás, hasta la escuela de Salamanca que mantenía contacto directo con las misiones: en sus aulas se formaron muchos misioneros y se resolvieron muchos problemas misionales. Según Vitoria [11], cuando en un país se permite la predicación del evangelio no se puede usar ningún medio violento; sólo si los paganos impiden la predicación se puede justificar una intervención armada, porque existe una violación del derecho y obligación que tiene la Iglesia de evangelizar [12], más una injuria a la libertad personal de conciencia que goza toda persona para convertirse [13]. Domingo de Soto concretiza más y resolvió de una forma definitiva, al menos en teoría, el problema de la coacción en la obra de la evangelización. Presidió las Juntas de Valladolid (1550-51) sobre los problemas jurídicos y misionales de las Indias occidentales. Insiste en el derecho natural de anunciar la palabra que tiene la Iglesia, pero a nadie se puede obligar a la conversión ni al bautismo, y esto lo deduce con un argumento nuevo sobre la naturaleza de la Fe: la Fe es sobrenatural y es un acto libre; como sobrenatural « omnia media ad ipsam seminandam ex ipsa eius natura sunt

[10] Leer p. e. su comentario *In II Sent.* dict. 44, q. 3. Consultar el magnífico trabajo de P. Leturia, *Maior y Vitoria ante la conquista de América*, en LETURIA, o. c., I, pp. 275-280. Maior recogía una cierta tradición originada en el agustinismo, V. MONACHINO, *El pensamiento de S. Agustín sobre el empleo de la fuerza política al servicio de la Religión*, en el vol.: *Contribución española a una Misionología Agustiniana*, Burgos 1955, 86-100.

[11] Trata de este tema principalmente en su comentario a la II-II, q. 10 art. 8. y en su primera *Relectio de Indis*. Además del art. cit en la nota anterior, consultar V. D. CARRO, *La teología y los teólogos juristas españoles ante la conquista de América*, 2 vols., Madrid 1944. Detrás de este tema yacen problemas que no podemos tratar, sobre el derecho de guerra, títulos de conquista, etc.

[12] *Obras de Fr. Vitoria*, Madrid 1960, p. 717. Interesante toda la introducción del P. Urdanoz a esta edición donde estudia las ideas teológico-jurídicas de Vitoria.

[13] *Obras de Fr. Vitoria*, p. 693. La protección armada sólo se justifica ante el hecho consumado que obstaculice la evangelización, nunca como acción preventiva. Ver CARRO, o. c., II, 240 ss.

perpendenda » [14]; como es libre a nadie se puede obligar a la Fe, sino sólo presentarla con una predicación llena de amor y atracción: « intentio Christi fuit persuadere orbi fidem ... neminem ergo ad fidem eiusmodi violentiis licitum est cogere, sed tantum amore allicere et perducere » [15]. Los teólogos jesuitas aceptaron estas conclusiones y avanzaron aún más en esta línea insistiendo en la libertad de todo infiel no sólo para convertirse sino también para oír la predicación. Es un nuevo paso. Por ejemplo, Suárez defiende el derecho que tiene la Iglesia a difundir el Evangelio, pero de este derecho no se deriva que ella tenga poder coactivo para obligar a que el evangelio sea oído [16], y a la vez niega Suárez todo poder temporal y espiritual de la Iglesia sobre los paganos porque no tiene jurisdicción sobre ellos [17].

En las misiones de Asia y América la reacción contra la teoría de una evangelización coercitiva fue aún mayor. Recordemos dos casos típicos. En pleno s. XVI se estudiaba ya en el Seminario del Japón este problema. Hasta nosotros ha llegado el manuscrito con el largo texto de Teología donde se negaba cualquier coacción, probándolo con argumentos de la S. Escritura, de los Padres, y de la Teología. Es interesante uno de los argumentos sacados de la naturaleza de la Iglesia, « licet Ecclesia christiana habeat ius dilatandi se ipsam, amplectendo omnes, qui sua sponte velint fidem suscipere, et habet ius vocandi eos ad se, et praeterea vindicandi iniurias sibi factas, sicut habet ceterae respublicae, attamen in infidelibus non apparet, unde habeat ius ad cogendum, cum Deus reliquerit homines in manu consilii sui in ordine ad vitam aeternam »; otro argumento interesante está deducido del mandato misionero de Cristo: « Chri-

[14] *In IV Sententiarum*, dis. 5, q. unica, art. 10, concl. 3 (en la ed. Venetiis 1584, I, p. 302). Insiste que « natura autem fidei prima est, ob id, quod supernaturalis existit ».

[15] Ib., (ed. cit., p. 303). Más adelante explica: « Praedicatio enim, ut dictum est, evangelica illum debet habere scopum, ut fidei non fiat iniuria, quidquid in hominibus contingat. Vi autem baptizare infideles, qui in sua infidelitate permansuri creduntur, est sacrilegam iniuriam irrogare fidei: quod cum sit per se malum, pro tota salute mundi per se non est faciendum » (ed. cit., p. 306).

[16] Por ejemplo, *De Fide*, disp. 18, sec. 2ª, 2ª sent., (ed. Vives, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 12, p. 441).

[17] Ib., p. 441 n. 2, p. 443 n. 6, p. 445 n. 5; y dentro de la disp. 10, pp. 280-81. Una visión de la teología del s. XVI sobre este tema en los artículos de Eduardo MARTIN ORTIZ, citados en la nota 19.

stus non praecepit ministris ut facerent omnes christianos, tunc enim possent omnes cogere, sed praecepit ut praedicarent evangelium, ad praedicandum tamen evangelium non est necessarium cogere eos, sed tantum praedicare ... » [18]. La evangelización no es para convertir a todos, sino sólo para anunciar al Evangelio. Como representante de América podemos escoger el tratado de Cristóbal de Cabrera, misionero del clero secular en Méjico que murió en Roma, 1598. Tiene como título, *De solicitanda infidelium conversione,* donde recoge y desarrolla admirablemente las mejores conclusiones de la escuela de Salamanca, en especial de Domingo de Soto [19].

El tema de la coacción ofreció una ocasión a teólogos y misioneros para profundizar en el concepto de evangelización. Sin superar aún este primer siglo, podemos presentar esquemáticamente dos teologías de la evangelización: una del profesor universitario, Francisco de Vitoria, y la otra de un misionero, P. José de Acosta. Dos representantes auténticos del pensamiento del s. XVI.

Las ideas teológicas de Vitoria sobre la evangelización, las podemos resumir en estas conclusiones:

— la predicación de la palabra es el *medio ordinario* para que los infieles conozcan a Cristo: hablando de la providencia salvífica de Dios, « et quamquam ita sit quod Deus gerit providentiam manifestandi nomen suum, non respondetur ad casum de eo qui nutritur in sylva sine mentione religionis: nam Deus ordinaria via non providet nisi per causas secundas, et de doctrina per predicatores, ad Rom. 10, 14 » [20]. Para enseñar su doctrina a los paganos, Dios usa de los predicadores como camino ordinario. Además de ser el medio ordinario, la predicación coloca al infiel, a través del acto de fe, en el « estado de salvación » [21].

[18] El texto de este cap. del manuscrito, en LOPEZ-GAY, *El Catecumenado en la misión del Japón del s. XVI,* Roma 1966, pp. 137-141. Entre los misioneros no faltaron algunas excepciones como Pedro de la Cruz, S.J. o las ideas excéntricas de Alonso Sánchez.

[19] Optimo estudio y edición de E. MARTIN ORTIZ, *La coacción de los infieles a la fe según Cristóbal de Cabrera. Estudio y edición del ms. Vat. Lat. 5026,* « Communio », 5 (1972) 23-186, 257-461.

[20] *Obras de Francisco de Vitoria,* o. c., p. 1338.

[21] Ib., pp. 715, 694: « tenentur audire; alias essent extra statum salutis ».

— a los que no llega la predicación, Dios ofrecerá la posibilidad de creer a través de medios extraordinarios como son la iluminación, o enviando un ángel o un predicador [22].

— los paganos pueden hacer obras rectas y buenas, y nadie será condenado por la ignorancia invencible de Cristo, sino por sus propios pecados [23].

— los infieles no tienen obligación de aceptar la predicación *si* no la ven acompañada de signos, como son los milagros y el testimonio de la vida, « barbari non ad primum nuntium fidei christianae tenentur credere ipsum, ita quod peccent mortaliter non credentes solum per hoc quod simpliciter annuntiatur eis et proponitur quod vera religio est christiana et quod Christus est salvator et redemptor mundi, sine miraculis, aut quacumque alia probatione aut suasione », y prueba su tesis con textos de la Escritura y de la teología de la Fe, concluyendo, « ergo ubi huiusmodi signa neque aliquod ad persuadendum concurrit, non tenenter barbari credere » [24]. Sólo tienen obligación, bajo pecado, de aceptar el mensaje cristiano cuando viene expuesto « con argumentos probables y racionales », junto con el testimonio « de una vida honesta », « milagros y señales », y « ejemplo religiosos de la vida » [25].

La necesidad de la palabra dentro de la obra de la evangelización, es sin duda el tema más repetido en los documentos misioneros del s. XVI: tanto en los doctrinales como en los prácticos. Sobre los *signos* que deben acompañar la evangelización, quizás fueron los misioneros franciscanos los que más insistieron de una manera explícita en el « modo apostólico » de evangelizar, interpretándolo más de una vez demasiado materialmente [26].

[22] Ib., p. 1335; 1338. Sobre este tema E. MAZORRA, *El problema de la salvación de los infieles en las Relecciones teológicas del Mtro Fr. F. de Vitoria,* « Archivo Teol. Granadino », 27 (1964) 205-235.

[23] Ib., pp. 687-670, 691.

[24] Ib., p. 692.

[25] Ib., 694-695. Teme el teólogo que por algunos abusos (no precisamente de los religiosos y sacerdotes) hasta ahora « non videtur quod religio christiana satis commode et pie sit illis praedicata ut illi teneantur acquiescere ».

[26] Un ejemplo, en esa literatura frecuente en el Asia entre diversas ordenes religiosas misioneras, basta leer las *Apologías* de Valignano jesuita o las *Relaciones e Informaciones* de San Martín de la Ascensión y Fray Marcelo de Ribadeneira, franciscanos.

El P. José de Acosta, S. I., misionero y misionólogo, publicaba en Salamanca, 1588, la primera edición de su obra: *De Promulgatione Evangelii apud Barbaros, sive de Procuranda Indorum salute* [27]. Las continuas ediciones prueban el influjo y la resonancia que obtuvo esta obra. El autor se presenta en el campo teológico como discípulo de Vitoria [28], aunque hay que reconocer que desarrolló más que su maestro la teoría de la evangelización. Concibe la evangelización como la *promulgación* del Evangelio a los no-cristianos, unida a un fin soteriológico: la *salvación.* El Evangelio suscita la fe en Cristo, y la fe salva.

El término *promulgación* reviste el carácter de un acto público, solemne, jurídico, que lleva a concebir el evangelio como la Nueva Ley. A veces, usa el término *annuntiatio* [29]. La promulgación del evangelio a través del ministerio de la palabra, es lo característico de la evangelización, y por esta razón no puede faltar en las misiones; éstas vienen definidas con palabras dinámicas, como « excursiones et peregrinationes quae oppidatim verbi divini causa suspiciuntur » [30]. La evangelización queda reducida a esta promulgación. Es verdad que Acosta denuncia la falta de un verdadero testimonio en el misionero y en los cristianos de las nuevas iglesias, como un gran obstáculo a la obra de la evangelización [31], pero no llegó a explicar positivamente la unión entre el ministerio de la palabra y el testimonio. Quizás extraña encontrarnos con un texto donde expone que hoy, en América, « no se puede observar exactamente la antigua y apostólica manera de evangelizar » [32]. Con nostalgia piensa que donde se pueda aplicar este modo puramente evangélico, « nada antes ni mejor » [33]; pero hoy, parte por la falta de esos signos extraordinarios que poseían los Apóstoles, parte por las circunstancias de los infieles americanos es imposible [34]. El oficio de

[27] La obra fue redactada en el 1576; la 2ª ed. en Salamanca 1589; nosotros citamos por la edición de Colonia, 1596. Hasta ahora el mejor estudio sobre la persona y su obra en L. LOPETEGUI, *El P. José de Acosta, S.J. y las Misiones, especialmente americanas, del s. XVI,* Madrid 1942.

[28] Ver en *De Procuranda,* pp. 203, 257, 485.

[29] Ib., p. 443.

[30] Ib., p. 506.

[31] Leer los libros IV y VI *de Procuranda.*

[32] Ibid., p. 213.

[33] Ib., p. 216.

[34] Ib., p. 218 ss. Siempre hay que seguir un modo apostólico, defiende Acosta, aunque a veces sea imposible practicar el « plenamente o puramente » apostólico. Indicaciones interesantes en L. Lopetegui, o. c., p. 350 ss. Desde luego no aceptó ningún medio violento en la obra de evangelización, *De Procuranda,* p. 165, 191 ss., 208. Subraya el testimonio del desprendimiento, como medio de predicar a los infieles, y el de la caridad, ib. p. 190.

evangelizar pertenece por derecho al Papa: « Evangelii promulgationem per totum terrarum orbem ad Romani Summique Pontificis auctoritatem pertinere » y lo prueba con textos neotestamentarios [35]. El Papa, de hecho, delega este oficio en los misioneros, entre los cuales incluye los laicos. Insiste que los obispos son sucesores de los Apóstoles, y por esto participan de la misión universal, pero « ellos no pueden llevarlo a cabo todo, además de quedar encerrados dentro de los límites de sus diócesis » [36]. Apenas si trata del deber evangelizador del obispo que rige ya una Iglesia formada y constituida.

Coloca la salvación como fin de la evangelización. El tema soteriológico aparece ya en el mismo título que abre el libro y en la frase que lo cierra: « la salvación eterna de las innumerables multitudes de paganos, descubiertas en el último siglo » [37]. *De procuranda Indorum salute* fue una frase acuñada por el P. Acosta y que introdujo luego en el vocabulario del tercer concilio de Lima. La « anunciación de Cristo, es decir, el Evangelio, es necesario no para que se salven más almas y mejor, sino para que absolutamente pudiesen los hombres salvarse » [38]. No encontraremos un texto más claro sobre la necesidad absoluta de la evangelización para la salvación. No se trata sólo de un medio para facilitar la salvación, o aumentar el número de los que se salvan. Es interesante notar en el texto la equivalencia entre almas y hombres. Cuando habla de almas, no significa que esté imbuido de una concepción dualística y olvide el hombre. Es verdad que subraya el valor escatológico de la salvación, y habla de la « salvación eterna », aunque no olvida las consecuencias sociales y humanas que se *derivan*

[35] *De Procuranda,* p. 254. Niega al Papa el poder temporal sobre los infieles.

[36] Ib., p. 254. Sobre los obispos como sucesores de los Apóstoles, ib. p. 393, 579, 496 ss.; sobre el poder limitado de los obispos, pp. 571, 894, 508. Sobre la vocación misionera de los obispos americanos, aparece claro su influjo en el Concilio limense del 1583, que citaremos más adelante.

[37] Las mismas ideas, ib., pp. 123, 143, 149, 501.

[38] Ib., p. 443.

de la evangelización para los indios. Esta salvación, fin de la evangelización se obtiene sólo con la fe explícita en Cristo: « lo he dicho y lo vuelvo a decir el fin de la predicación es la fe en Cristo » [39]; por esta razón une constantemente los dos términos: « salutem ... fideique propagationem » [40].

Merece la pena detenerse un momento en la práctica misionera para señalar algunos elementos que explican desde otro punto de vista la concepción de la evangelización en aquel siglo de expansión misionera.

El bautismo y la evangelización. El primer fruto de la evangelización es la fe en Cristo y la conversión. Pero los misioneros insistieron en la necesidad de manifestar la fe cuanto antes en el bautismo. Y el bautismo venía concedido enseguida. Después que el pagano daba señales de creer y aceptar la nueva moral, venía admitido al bautismo. Jamás se administraba el bautismo sin la evangelización. Pero el catecumenado prebautismal duraba relativamente poco: desde una semana hasta un mes. La instrucción sistemática se dejaba para la época postbautismal. Procedían así inspirándose, repetían constantemente, en el ejemplo de los Apóstoles y en los privilegios recibidos del Papa; creían que aquellas circunstancias se podían comparar a los casos de « urgente necesidad », en los cuales, según el juicio de teólogos y canonistas, podía bautizarse tras la evangelización de lo más esencial. No faltaba una mentalidad que atribuía al rito externo un valor relevante en la obra de evangelización. Esta era la forma de proceder en Asia [41] y en América [42]. Los Concilios regionales abordaron el problema, pero sin dar soluciones concretas. En el decreto 37 del primer Concilio de Goa (1567) se decía « no se bautizarán sin ser primero instruídos en los artículos de la Fe y en los mandamientos de la Ley, más

[39] Ib., p. 438. Sobre el tema de la fe « explícita », L. LOPETEGUI, o. c., p. 281.

[40] Ib., pp. 123, 129 etc.

[41] J. LOPEZ-GAY, *El Catecumenado en la misión del Japón del s. XVI*, Roma 1966, pp. 36-51.

[42] J. SPECKER, *Die Missionsmethode in Spanisch-America im 16. Jahrhundert mit besonderer Besichtigung der Konzilien und Synoden*, Schönen-Beckenried 1953; *La predicación de la Fe en la América Española del s. XVI tal como se refleja en los Concilios y Sínodos americanos*, « Misiones Extranjeras », 3 (1952). Cl. CECCHERELLI, *El bautismo y los Franciscanos en Méjico* (1524-1539), « Missionalia Hispanica » 12 (1955) 209-289.

o menos, según la capacidad de cada uno; los cuales no es necesario saber de corazón » [43]; un año más tarde el arzobispo de Goa publicó unas Constituciones, y en ellas se mandaba que nadie « sea bautizado sin ser instruido ... sin la cual instrucción, ya gaste mucho ya poco tiempo, no será bautizado » [44]. El tercer Concilio de Goa (1585) ordenó que « a los gentiles y moros naturales no se dé el bautismo antes de 20 días de catecismo » [45]. La famosa Junta de Méjico (1536) bajo Zumárraga, sólo mandó que todos antes del bautismo tenían que ser catequizados y exorcizados [46]; esta misma línea siguió la bula *Altitudo* de Pablo III [47]; los Concilios de Lima descendieron a más detalles [48], mientras el Sínodo de Quito (1570) sólo habla de un tiempo conveniente de instrucción pre-bautismal [49].

Otro aspecto de la evangelización fue su consecuente radicalismo. En la práctica, la evangelización no sólo convertía el hombre a Cristo sino que le imponía la extirpación de todas sus creencias y cultos religiosos. En aquel período, la evangelización carecía de esa dimensión de búsqueda de las « semina verbi », o de un diálogo constructivo. Como método dentro de la evangelización, se siguió, principalmente en las áreas donde pululaban las religiones primitivas, la lucha contra la llamada idolatría. En los países que profesaban una religión positiva, pensemos en el Japón o China, los evangelizadores siguieron un camino más afirmativo de encuentro. « Para sentar la doctrina del Evangelio en cualquier nación donde se predica de nuevo, del todo es necesario quitar los errores contrarios que los infieles tienen ... », rezaba el *Confesionario para los Curas de indios publicado en Lima* (1585) [50]. Esta extirpación de las creencias

[43] *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae Regum ... curante vicecomite de Paiva Manso*, Appendix, vol. I, Olisipone 1872, p. 14.

[44] *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado português do Oriente*, edición de SILVA REGO, vol. 10, Lisboa 1953, p. 498.

[45] *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, o. c., p. 71.

[46] Cl. CECCHERELLI, *El bautismo y los Franciscanos en Méjico*, art. c., p. 236.

[47] HERNAEZ, *Colección de Bulas*, o. c., I, 66.

[48] El primer Concilio de Lima determina 30 días, el segundo: « non solum quindecim dies, sed etiam per mensem », etc.; de este último Concilio la edición crítica en « Missionalia Hispanica », 7 (1950), nuestro texto p. 221. Una visión de conjunto en el art. citado en la nota siguiente.

[49] J. SPECKER, *La predicación de la Fe en la América Española del s. XVI*, art. cit., p. 26.

[50] *Confessionario para los Curas de indios, con la instrucción contra sus ritos ...*, Lima 1585, f. 2.

y cultos religiosos revistió en los primeros momentos un carácter público y externo [51]. Pero no se limitó a ésto. La obra de la evangelización contenía como algo propio una refutación teórica de las falsas creencias [52], exigiendo, a los misioneros un estudio muy interesante de las religiones no-cristianas. Las descripciones que nos han dejado aquellos primeros evangelizadores de las creencias de los pueblos americanos o asiáticos no fueron superadas en los siglos siguientes. Es verdad que a la hora de interpretarlas veían en el origen y evolución de ellas la presencia del demonio. Ayudó a esta concepción el momento histórico de crisis que atravesaban algunas de estas religiones, como las unidas con la cultura azteca o el budismo del Japón.

Dentro de la obra de evangelización en aquel primer período llama la atención la participación masiva, numéricamente elevadísima y con algunos logros magníficos de organización, de los laicos nativos. Desde luego es una nota necesaria para comprender cómo se interpretaba entonces la evangelización. Quizás nació de la dificultad de poder comunicar el mensaje en lenguas extranjeras. Esta razón no explica todo el fenómeno. Aun después de dominar las lenguas, los misioneros seguían usando los laicos. Y además en todas las misiones. Quizás se debía a ese sentido de urgencia, conscientes de vivir una oportunidad excepcional para anunciar a Cristo, en la que había que aprovechar todos los medios. Esta razón se repite en los documentos. Desde luego en el campo de la predicación no hicieron una clara separación entre el ministerio de los laicos y el de los sacerdotes. Otra cosa habría que decir del campo sacramental. Los misioneros defienden su actitud recordando los « cooperadores » laicos de San Pablo. Los laicos participan, en cuanto colaboradores y cooperadores de los misioneros, de la misión canónica necesaria para predicar la palabra de Dios. En la India se comenzó con una organización, no muy definida de laicos llamados

[51] P. BORGES, *La extirpación de la idolatría en Indias como método misional*, « Missionalia Hispanica », 14 (1957) 193-270; principalmente desde la p. 225; los Concilios de Lima decretaron derribar y destruir todos los ídolos (p. 228); algunos misioneros se opusieron a este método, como el P. J. de Acosta, B. de las Casas (p. 237).

[52] En el Asia, por ej., el *Catecismo* de Valignano (Lisboa 1586) contiene principalmente una exposición cuidadosa (y refutación) de las sectas budistas del Japón; para las religiones americanas interesante la obra de Benardino de Sahagún: *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, ed. de E. Seler, I, México 1938.

kanakkapillei: hombres casados al frente de una iglesia desprovista de sacerdote, y entre sus oficios enseñaban la doctrina, cuidaban de la comunidad, y preparaban los paganos para el bautismo; en el Japón con caracteres muy definidos aparecieron los dôjuku, término budista, dedicados plenamente a la evangelización, « cooperadores en el Evangelio, que llamamos dôjukus ... ellos fueron hasta ahora los que predicaron y catequizaron »; hacían dos votos o promesas, la de celibato y dedicarse al ministerio de la evangelización [53]. En este misma línea, la organización más perfecta fue la Domus Dei del Vietnam formada con los thay o catequistas laicos, unidos con los votos de pobreza, castidad ad tempus y obediencia al superior de la misión; por su mayor estabilidad fue una organización providencial en tiempos de persecución [54]. En Filipinas [55], y en América [56] nos encontramos con los fiscales, una especie de diáconos sin órdenes, casados, responsables de una comunidad cristiana; quizás en ellos se subrayó más el aspecto pastoral que el kerygmático. Esta participación de los laicos en la obra de la evangelización fue luego frenada por algunos Concilios provinciales celebrados en las misiones [57], y por la misma Congregación de Propaganda Fide [58].

[53] Los textos citados y un estudio detallado, en nuestro art., *Las organizaciones de laicos en el apostolado de la primitiva misión del Japón*, « Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu », 36 (1967) 3-31.

[54] La fuente principal es la obra del P. de Rhodes, *Divers voyages et Missions* ..., Paris 1653, p. 123 ss., 187 ss., 192-193. Ver NGUYEN-VIET-CU, *De institutione Domus Dei in missionibus Tonking* (*Vietnam*), Roma 1954.

[55] E. NEIRA, *The Conversion Methodology in Philippine*, Manila 1966, donde se indican las fuentes y la bibliografía.

[56] G. GUARDA, *El apostolado seglar en la cristianización de América. La institución de los fiscales*, « Historia », 7 (1968) 205-225. *Notas sobre el apostolado seglar en América Española en los ss. XVI-XIX*, « Teología y Vida », 13 (1972) 66-78. J. B. OLAECHEA, *Participación de los Indios en la tarea evangélica*, « Missionalia Hispanica », 26 (1969) 241-256. P. BORGES, *Métodos misionales en la cristianización de América*, Madrid 1960, pp. 293 ss., 536-538. En la constit. 8º del primer Sínodo de Tucumán (1597) encontramos una magnífica descripción de lo que es un fiscal, texto del Sínodo en « Missionalia Hisp. », 28 (1971) 16-17.

[57] Por ej., el cap. 80 del segundo Concilio de Lima: « Laicis saeculares non praedicent, neque omnino doceant », en el texto se dice « neque indis verbum Dei proponant » (la segunda parte del cap. está dedicada a las mujeres), y como razones ofrece algunas de orden jurídico o teológico, la necesidad de la misión canónica, y otras de orden práctico; no faltan alusiones a las intervenciones de la Iglesia, como en el Concilio de Constanza y en el más reciente de Trento (ver en Denzinger, nn. 1277, 1610).

[58] Por ej., con respecto al Japón L. PEDOT, *La S. C. de Propaganda*

Conclusiones sobre este primer período que hemos estudiado detenidamente. Existió una reflexión constante a nivel teológico (principalmente en las Universidades) y práctico sobre el problema de la evangelización. El término *evangelización* no aparece aún; se usa como equivalentes, en su forma verbal o sustantiva: *praedicare, (an)nuntiare, propagare, seminare,* etc. Y como complemento los substantivos: *evangelium, verbum, fidem.* Las tres últimas formas verbales se reservan preferentemente para la evangelización misionera.

1. — La evangelización misionera viene concebida como « anuncio de la palabra » entre los infieles, al cual la Iglesia tiene derecho natural y obligación, porque para ésto ha sido instituída. Esta responsabilidad recae primeramente sobre el Papa.

2. — En la evangelización se daba mucho más importancia al primer anuncio que suscitaba la fe y conversión a Cristo, que a la formación catequética. Se puede decir que muchos pueblos fueron evangelizados, y quizás no bien catequizados.

3. — Se buscó la colaboración de los laicos nativos para el anuncio del evangelio, formándose « organizaciones » para esta obra. En algunas regiones más de la mitad de la fuerza evangelizadora estaba formada por laicos.

4. — El anuncio debe ir siempre acompañado de « signos » que confirmen la palabra; como los signos extraordinarios (milagros) apenas si se dan, el signo actual esencial es el testimonio de la vida del misionero y de la comunidad incipiente.

5. — El bautismo aparece íntimamente ligado a la evangelización. Se insistió en su valor y necesidad, y venía concebido no como una meta, sino como el comienzo de una nueva vida.

6. — El tema de la necesidad de la fe en Cristo ocasionó una serie de discusiones, sobre todo al tratar de su explicitación, que oscureció algo el carácter cristocéntrico, vivo, de la evangelización.

7. — Al pagano no evangelizado se le considera libre para oír la predicación y para convertirse, tanto por un derecho personal como por la naturaleza misma de la fe. (Algunos defen-

Fide e le missioni del Giappone, Vicenza 1946, 255-266, de nuevo fundamenta su postura en la falta de misión, no tener carácter sagrado y posibilidad de conflictos con la Jerarquía.

dieron la licitud de la violencia cuando no era respetado el derecho de la Iglesia a la evangelización).

Se echa de menos una reflexión sobre las relaciones entre evangelización e Iglesia, evangelización y el hombre, evangelización y religiones no-cristianas. La salvación fruto de la evangelización tiene un carácter marcadamente escatológico, al menos en teoría; en la práctica, la obra de evangelización fue dejando por todas partes señales de atención al hombre y a sus problemas.

* * *

Después de estudiar este primer período debemos fijarnos en el siglo XIX, cuando el término *evangelización* entra explícitamente en el vocabulario misionero, enriquecido con nuevos matices [59]. El objeto de nuestro estudio será el pensamiento de las Iglesias cristianas protestantes. En los siglos prcedentes, la obra de la evangelización estuvo en manos de los católicos. El s. XIX fue el despertar misionero para toda la Iglesia, católica y protestante; para esta última era una novedad, y constituye el « gran siglo » (1815-1914) de su actividad misionera [60]. Por otra parte, las características que definen el concepto de evangelización entre estas fuerzas nuevas protestantes, tienen un pa-

[59] No nos detenemos en los ss. XVII y XVIII por no encontrar nuevos valores relevantes. Más aún, se perdieron algunos del siglo XVI. La fundación de la S. Congregación de Propaganda Fide (1622) fue providencial para la obra de la evangelización, pero su competencia y finalidad no era primariamente ideológica, sino práctica, administrativa y funcional. (Leer los artículos aparecidos en el primer vol., *Sacrae Congregationis de P. Fide Memoria rerum,* Roma 1971, principalmente los de A. REUTER, pp. 122-144 sobre los derechos, índole y obligaciones de la Congregación, y J. METZLER, pp. 146-196, sobre las primeras decisiones y orientación). El valor de la S. C. P. Fide aparece, ante todo, en su insistencia por la formación y preparación de los misioneros, y la formación del clero indígena; trabajó para que la evangelización recobrase su carácter estrictamente espiritual, librándola de la unión con los poderes coloniales, e insistiendo para que el trabajo misionero permaneciese ajeno de todo aspecto político o comercial. Quizás en la práctica cayó, a veces, en el defecto que quería evitar apoyándose en el nuevo poder de la Francia, y a sus respuestas les faltó alguna vez amplitud de miras.

[60] « The Great Century » fue un término puesto en voga por K. S. LATOURETTE: ya el volumen IV, de su Historia de la Expansión del Cristianismo lleva como título: *The Great Century,* London 1941; el autor pone como fechas límites el 1814, fin de las guerras napoleónicas, y el 1915, comienzo del conflicto mundial, o. c., p. 7.

ralelismo bastante exacto en la Iglesia católica. Es el siglo del desarrollo de las Sociedades misioneras protestantes, que a veces tienen que romper con la Iglesia oficial para seguir su propia vocación, y de centenares de Institutos misioneros católicos. En medio de este fervor misionero, ¿qué significaba la evangelización?

Si terminamos la sección anterior presentando unas conclusiones, podemos comenzar ésta ofreciendo también en forma de conclusiones, las características de la evangelización en esta época. Indiquemos, primero, brevemente algunas notas propias del ambiente espiritual y cultural que influyeron de una forma decisiva en la concepción de la evangelización. Nació el siglo y fue desenvolviéndose bajo el signo del romanticismo. Vuelve a revivir el pietismo como una reacción contra el racionalismo contemporáneo, queriendo retornar al primer amor y experiencia cristiana. El optimismo es casi congénito al hombre de aquel siglo, que domina parte de las fuerzas de la naturaleza y dispone de nuevos medios de navegación y comunicación para sentirse cerca de todos los hombres. Se desarrolla un sentido popular y comunitario, es el siglo de los movimientos sociales y de la incipiente democracia. A la vez, nuevos continentes como Africa, China y la India se abrieron al influjo del Occidente [61]. Todas estas notas dejarán su huella en la evangelización.

1. — Se usa explícitamente, desde mediados del siglo, el término *evangelización* para designar el anuncio del evangelio a todos los hombres, y en concreto a los no-cristianos. Cada vez se reduce el significado del término a la evangelización propiamente misionera entre los no-cristianos.

2. — La evangelización tiene un carácter marcadamente *cristocéntrico*. Su punto de partida e inconmovible fundamento es el mandato misionero de Cristo.

3. — En la teología de la evangelización comienza a subrayarse la función del Espíritu Santo, y el sentido de la instrumentalidad humana. Se concede un valor especial a la oración.

4. — El *bautismo* queda separado de la evangelización, y

[61] Una presentación analítica de estas características y su relación con la evangelización en K. S. LATOURETTE, *The History of the Expansion of the Christianity*, IV, o. c., capítulos 1-3; del mismo autor tres vols.: *Christianity in a Revolutionary Age*, New York 1969 (los dos primeros vols. están dedicados a Europa).

sólo viene administrado a quien después de un largo período ha dado pruebas de una verdadera conversión y de una auténtica vida moral.

5. — La evangelización adquiere una orientación marcadamente *ética*, así la evangelización se une con el tema de la *educación*, y el evangelizador adquiere un cierto sentido de superioridad. La evangelización anuncia a Cristo, y enseña los valores éticos y culturales del occidente.

6. — Se nota un exagerado *optimismo*, esperando evangelizar el mundo en aquella generación. En las últimas décadas del siglo se repite la consigna: « The Evangelization of the World in this generation ». Todos, en especial los luteranos, ven la realización de las condiciones para la vuelta de Jesús.

7. — La obra de la evangelización interesa y compromete al *pueblo*: se organizan los movimientos misioneros de la juventud, y la participación activa de la mujer.

8. — No faltan otros aspectos que quedan en penumbra. La evangelización no aparece tanto como obra de la Iglesia sino de los cristianos o de las Sociedades misioneras. A superar esta deficiencia vendrá la Conferencia ecuménica de New York, 1900. Apenas si se habla de la unión entre liturgia y evangelización. La postura ante las religiones no-cristianas es de conquista. Y en la práctica quedó la evangelización demasiado unida al colonialismo. El hombre evangelizado queda demasiado idealizado, separado de sus problemas.

Al fin del s. XVIII el movimiento *Evangelical Revival* estaba ejerciendo un fuerte influjo en Inglaterra. Predicadores itinerantes que anuncian la conversión a Cristo queriendo volver a una vida auténticamente evangélica [62]. Insistían en la oración y su valor, y entre los lemas más repetidos podemos recordar aquel de « Iglesia o no Iglesia lo que importa es la salvación de las almas » [63], « nuestro campo de acción es el mundo en-

[62] J. D. WALSH, *Origins of the Evangelical Revival*, dentro del volumen editado por G. V. Bennet y Walsh: *Essays in Modern English Church History*, London 1966, pp. 132-162. E. A. PAYNE, *The Church awakes. The story of the modern Missionary Movement*, London 1942.

[63] Frase de J. Wesley, uno de los representantes de este movimiento, C. SMYTH, *Simeon and the Church Order. A Study of the Evangelical Revival ...*, Cambridge 1940, p. 256.

tero »[64]. Muchos de estos predicadores eran milenaristas[65]. Y dentro de este ambiente van a brotar las primeras Sociedades misioneras. El primer fruto fue la *Baptist Missionary Society,* fundada por William Carey (m. 1834), quien publicó un pequeño libro sobre la obligación de los cristianos de usar los medios posibles para la conversión de los paganos[66]. En esta obra no aparece el término *evangelización,* sino el de predicación. Se insiste en la fuerza obligatoria del mandato misionero de Cristo, y se pretende organizar una especie de apostolado de oración en favor de las misiones.

Cuando Carey murió en la India, estaba presente un joven misionero escocés, Alexander Duff (1806-1878), que desde hacía cuatro años trabajaba en la India. Su ideal misionero era utilizar la educación para presentar el cristianismo, y de esta forma debilitar y deshacer el hinduismo[67]. No consideraba la educación ajena a la obra de evangelización: toda verdad tiene una relación con Cristo y encuentra en El su única explicación. En el 1837 volvió a Inglaterra donde con palabras llenas de romanticismo espuso el problema urgente de las misiones. Sale otra vez de la India para visitar Norteamérica en el 1854, y su presencia y discursos, confiesan los testigos, « shock the continent »[68]. Los primeros días de mayo participó a un Congreso misionero de Nueva York, donde pronunció un famoso discurso, del que son las siguientes palabras:

> « The chief means of Divine appointment, for the *evangelization* of the world are the faithful teaching and preaching of the pure Gospel of salvation by duly qualified ministers and other holy and consistent disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, accompanied with prayer and savingly applied by the grace of the Holy Spirit »[69].

Es la primera vez que encontramos en un texto público referente a las misiones entre no-cristianos, el término *evangelización del mundo.* Como medio, las dos actividades, kerygmática y docente, que transmiten fielmente el Evangelio de salvación. Mientras que se coloca en el Espíritu la razón del fruto, se exige al ministro una vida de santidad. Desde ahora no desaparecerá del ambiente misionero de los Estados Unidos el término *evangelización del mundo.* Veamos algunos ejemplos, en los que encontraremos confirmadas las características de la evangelización que antes hemos resumido.

El *Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions* comenzó a partir de una reunión en el monte Hermón, del Massachusetts, bajo la dirección de D. L. Moody, en el verano del 1886[70]. « Todos debemos ir a todos » fue el lema de aquel encuentro. El movimiento adquirió una gran expansión gracias al entusiasmo de su director, el joven John R. Mott, quien se esforzó por convertirlo en un movimiento interdenominacional. En el 1888 lanzó una consigna (que él llamaba « watchword ») para dar unidad, fuerza y orientación a este movimiento: « The Evangelisation of the World in this Generation »[71]. Y J. R. Mott, re-

[64] « Our field is the world », de un sermón de Wayland, citado en LATOURETTE, IV, p. 19 nota 7. Frase luego repetida por A. Duff, y J. R. Mott.

[65] Por ejemplo, D. Bogue, ver J. BENNET, *Memoirs of the life of the Rev. David Bogue,* London 1827. R. TURTAS, *L'attivitá e la politica missionaria della direzione della London Missionary Society,* Roma 1971, p. 12, nota 27.

[66] *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens,* Leicester 1792 (existe reproducción fotográfica, London 1934). En la I[a] sección se habla del mandato misionero, su actualidad y obligatoriedad; la II[a] es histórica; la III[a] presenta la situación del mundo; en la IV[a], sobre los problemas y soluciones de la conversión de los paganos; en la V[a] se presentan las dos formas de realizar la misión: la oración, y la fundación de sociedades misioneras. Una vez formadas las Sociedades misioneras, se elaboran programas de estudios, clases, etc. aún no se habla de *evangelización,* sino de « preaching », ver TURTAS, o. c., p. 192 ss.

[67] La mejor biografía, G. SMITH, *The Life of Alexander Duff,* dos vols., London 1879; el mismo autor publicó une edición popular en el 1881. Con un carácter más interpretativo, W. PATON, *Alexander Duff. Pioneer of Missionary Education,* London 1923, intersante todo el cap. XIV; Paton reconoce que Duff « hasta cierto punto identificó el Cristianismo con la civilización de los pueblos cristianos », p. 199. Sobre las ideas de Duff acerca de la educación-misión, O. G. MYKLEBUST, *The Study of Missions in Theological Education,* I, Oslo 1955, pp. 19-24, 158-242.

[68] Sobre este viaje, G. SMITH, o. c., II, 268 ss. (en la edic. popular, pp. 346-347). W. PATON, o. c., 162 ss.

[69] El texto fue publicado en *Proceedings of the Unión Missionary Convention Held in New York, May 4th and 5th, 1854,* New York 1854. Luego sigue presentando los medios prácticos de realizar la evangelización. La idea inicial es una prueba bíblica de la esperanza de convertir el mundo a Cristo.

[70] La historia de este movimiento en J. R. MOTT, *History of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions,* Chicago 1892. R. P. WILDER, *The Great Commission. The Missionary Response of the Student V. M. in North America and Europe,* London 1936. T. TATLOW, *The Story of the Student V. M. of Great Britain and Ireland,* London, 1933.

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[71] La consigna la explicó en un extenso libro (245 páginas): J. R. MOTT,

corrió universidades y Colegios entusiasmando a los jóvenes con la explicación de la consigna. Viene interpretada a partir de una idea teológica: cada generación tiene obligación de dar a conocer el mensaje de Cristo a sus contemporáneos; y de un hecho histórico: las posibilidades que ofrece hoy el mundo son únicas, y todos los hombres esperan el anuncio de Cristo. La evangelización tiene un carácter universalista, se trata de evangelizar el mundo, pero siempre está presente la idea de los paganos; un carácter de urgencia, se trata de llevarla a cabo en *esta* generación presente, y a la vez de optimismo: ante las graves dificultades, el evangelizador puede realizar la evangelización de todo el mundo hoy. El libro de Mott que contenía la explicación de su consigna fue leido y comentado no sólo en América sino en Europa. Es verdad que a veces no faltan frases de sabor militarista, como cuando describe el trabajo misionero como una « guerra de conquista », que no hay que interpretarlas en un sentido peyorativo, sino leerlas a la luz del ambiente y lenguaje de la época.

Entre la literatura misional dedicada al gran público no es difícil encontrar libros que llevan como título la consigna de J. Mott. Por ejemplo, *The Evangelisation of the World. A Missionary Band,* obra en colaboración por varios misioneros de China [72]. El fin del libro es demostrar que « en este mundo no hay nada tan grande, tan noble, tan cristiano, tan verdaderamente divino como el trabajo de evangelizar a los paganos ». La primera parte contiene historias de las misiones protestantes; la segunda, más ideológica, busca los fundamentos bíblicos de la evangelización. Todo el libro transpira optimismo y confianza de poder evangelizar el mundo ya que vivimos en la « época de la gran oportunidad ».

Y llegamos al 1900, cuando se celebró en Nueva York un Congreso Ecuménico sobre las Misiones extranjeras. La participación fué un éxito y aquel mismo año se publicaron las

The Evangelisation of the World in this Generation, New York 1900 (al año ya había aparecido la trad. noruega); los caps. 5 y 6 los más interesantes. Sobre el autor, B. MATTHEWS, *John R. Mott, world citizen,* London 1934.

[72] Usamos la edición del 1887; la 1ª ed. de 10.000 ejemplares se agotó en pocos meses; esta nueva edición contiene una nueva sección sobre la participación de la mujer en la evangelización, pp. 143-157.

actas [73]. « Ha llegado el tiempo que la Iglesia se interese, como tal, vivamente de los problemas relacionados con la evangelización del mundo », esta frase del prólogo revela el fin y el ambiente del Congreso. Todo él giró sobre el tema de la evangelización misionera. Y el Secretario, R. E. Speer resumió en unas líneas el resultado: « La Conferencia ha sido una prueba de la practicabilidad de las misiones. La evangelización del mundo, que significa la necesidad de evangelizar la generación que actualmente vive en el mundo, no aparece ahora como una cosa quimérica. Que dentro de las obligaciones y posibilidades (duty and ability) de la Iglesia se encuentra ésta de evangelizar el mundo, ha sido una de las lecciones potentes y penetrantes de la Conferencia » [74]. A lo largo del Congreso se insistió sobre la posibilidad del mundo contemporáneo para ser evangelizado. Casi todas las ponencias tienen un tono de entusiasmo, de elevada espiritualidad, encontrando en el mandato misionero de Cristo el fundamento de la evangelización y en el Espíritu Santo la fuerza para realizarlo. Para conocer el significado del término *evangelización* en estos momentos, conviene detenerse en la ponencia de R. E. Speer, donde violentamente refuta aquellas teorías que ponen como fin de la misión « la total reorganización de toda la estructura social ... reorganizar los Estados y reconstruir la Sociedad »; todo esto no puede superar la categoría de simple medio o método. El único fin de la misión es la evangelización del mundo, y la evangelización « is to make Jesus Christ known to the World » [75]. Queda separado de la evangelización todo trabajo social o político. Interesante la conferencia de J. R. Mott, quien intentó explicar la significación de su consigna que ya conocemos. « Significa ofrecer a cada persona una oportunidad adecuada de conocer a Cristo como Salvador del mundo. No significa la conversión del mundo en esta generación. No se refiere a una superficial o apresurada predicación del Evangelio. La consigna no viene usada como una profecía.

[73] Todos los discursos y comunicaciones están recogidos en dos vols.: *Ecumenical Missionary Conference. New York, 1900,* New York 1900. Nos interesa el vol. I, sobre todo, la parte segunda: « The Missionary idea »; la primera parte, breve, trata sólo de la historia de la Conferencia, y la tercera es un « Survey of the Field ».

[74] *Ecumenical Missionary Conference,* o. c., p. 39.

[75] Ib., pp. 75-77. En el contexto recuerda las frases que A. Duff había pronunciado en aquella misma ciudad hacia 46 años.

La evangelización del mundo en esta generación no es fin en sí misma. A la evangelización debe seguir el bautismo de los convertidos y su organización en Iglesias ... el objetivo que siempre hay que tener presente es la plantación y el desarrollo en todos los pueblos no-cristianos, de Iglesias autosuficientes, que se gobiernen a sí mismas »[76]. Con verdadera intuición Mott ha subrayado el carácter eclesial de la evangelización, aunque todavía habrá que esperar algunos años para contemplar unidas Iglesia y evangelización. Distancia el bautismo de la evangelización[77]. En todo el Congreso apenas si se oyó una alusión a la relación entre las religiones no-cristianas o los problemas reales de los hombres y la evangelización. Este idealismo pronto será criticado.

* * *

Al comenzar el siglo XX ya comienzan a oírse las primeras críticas del concepto de evangelización que se había formado en el siglo anterior. Ven en él una evasión de los problemas que afectan al mundo y al hombre. Un historiador actual del pensamiento religioso americano resume así el ambiente de principios de siglo: « ' Evangelization ', so the critique ran, had come to mean no more than ' presenting ' Christ to the World so that prophecy might be fulfilled and a premillenniarian expectation of the Second Coming provided »[78]. En Inglaterra se formaron las mismas tensiones, como demuestra la Conferencia de Matlock, 1909, donde los miembros del movimiento misionero universitario introducen el tema « social y político », superando el concepto de evangelización que miraba al mundo como irremediable[79]. Ha sido un paso importante en la evolución de la evangelización. Impuesto por unas circunstancias históricas urgentes. Es verdad que en Matlock se habló mucho más del « Reino de Dios », que de evangelización. Parece que la misma

[76] Ib., p. 95.

[77] Ib., p. 105. Muchas mujeres intervinieron insistiendo en la función de la mujer en la obra de la evangelización, pp. 114 ss., 135 ss.

[78] S. E. AHLSTROM, *A Religious History of the American People*, 2ª ed., Yale Univ. 1973, p. 866. Un ejemplo de estas críticas la obra de E. MCAFEE, *The Crisis of Missionary Methods*, New York 1911. Una visión de conjunto en W. E. HOCKING, *Re-Thinking Missions. A Layman's Inquire after one Hundred Years*, New York 1932.

[79] T. TATLOW, *The Story of the Student V. M.*, o. c., cap. XVIII: « The Rise of the Social Consciousness », p. 338 ss.

palabra ya no atrae, y hasta cierto punto tiene un significado demasiado alejado de la realidad.

Todavía en la primera Conferencia misionera del Consejo Mundial, Edimburgh 1910, como epílogo de una época, se habla de la evangelización con unas notas de optimismo e idealismo propias del s. XIX. J. Mott tuvo la conferencia conclusiva[80]. Comparando con el Congreso de New York, se advierte que el término evangelización se usa mucho menos. Que la relación entre Iglesia y evangelización ha quedado en la sombra. El gran fruto de esta conferencia mundial fue el tema ecuménico.

Después de la primera guerra mundial, parecía que toda actividad había quedado como detenida. La evangelización, su concepto y su práctica sufren unos momentos de vacilación. La situación en los países de misión ha cambiado notablemente, despertando un nuevo nacionalismo y valorizándose las propias religiones y culturas. Los misioneros hablan ahora un lenguaje más realista, y los misionólogos, sobre todo, los del grupo evangélico, reflexionan seriamente. ¿No ha pasado ya una generación y el mundo permanece aún lejos de estar evangelizado? ¿No van fortaleciéndose los movimientos religiosos no-cristianos? Y en este contexto se celebró en Jerusalén el nuevo Congreso Internacional misionero, año 1928. Con un realismo sano, el primer problema que se afronta es el de las religiones no-cristianas[81]. Y se estudió explícitamente la relación entre evangelización y religiones[82]. Ha sido un enriquecimiento dentro de la evolución del concepto de evangelización. Pero este término, que había iluminado toda la actividad y el pensamiento misionero del siglo anterior, comienza a eclipsarse. Ahora pasa a un primer plano un nuevo término *Evangelismo*. ¿Cómo y por qué se ha formado esta nueva terminología? Ciertamente viene usado como equivalente de evangelización, como se afirma repetidas

[80] Todas las actas fueron publicadas en once vols., Edimburgh 1910. El discurso de Mott en el vol. IX, p. 346 ss.

[81] *The Jerusalem Meeting of the Intern. Missionary Council*, London 1928. El primer vol. está dedicado a las religiones no-cristianas: *The Christian Life and Message in relation to non-christian Systems of Thought and Life*. Interesante el cap. X donde R. E. Speer discute el valor de las religiones no cristianas.

[82] Ib., W. TEMPLE en el cap. XI: « A Statement of the Case for Evangelisation ». J. MacKay insiste en la « centralidad de Cristo en la evangelización ».

veces. No faltan, con todo, razones que muestran la predilección por este nuevo término.

La introducción de la palabra Evangelismo en el vocabulario misionero, puede responder a un deseo de restituir a la misión su carácter kerygmático, substituyendo el término *evangelización* tan criticado en aquellos años y ya desgastado, por uno nuevo pero equivalente. Aparece clara otra razón teológica, queriendo revivir hoy día el carisma de los « evangelistas », tan frecuente en la primitiva Iglesia. Hasta final de la segunda guerra, se hablará ya de *evangelismo.*

Algunas obras publicadas en aquellos años nos ayudan a comprender estas razones de la substitución verbal, y a profundizar en el sentido auténtico de evangelismo. Comencemos con el libro de Alexander McLeish, *Jesus Christ and World Evangelization* [83]. El autor confiesa que el origen de su obra es antiguo, cuando en los primeros años del siglo estudió la famosa « consigna » de J. R. Mott sobre la evangelización del mundo en la presente generación. Se esfuerza por conservar el antiguo término, y explicar el verdadero sentido de la consigna refutando las críticas que se le han hecho. A la vez no puede prescindir de los cambios, y acepta convencido la nueva palabra, evangelismo, exponiendo su verdadero sentido. La consigna « la evangelización del mundo en nuestra generación » exprime un dato teológico: la obligación que cada cristiano tiene en su tiempo de evangelizar el mundo. No se trata de limitar el poder de Dios a una generación concreta ni de quitar a la evangelización su dimensión escatológica. Los dos términos, evangelización y nuestra generación, son correlativos y se explican mutuamente: no existiría evangelización si no existe una conciencia en la generación actual de realizarla, y una obligación presente de aceptarla por parte de quien es evangelizado. « La evangelización no es civilización », y aunque es obra esencial de la Iglesia no se puede confundir con la « cristianificación » o trabajo de formación de las Iglesias; consiste esencialmente en el anuncio de Cristo confirmado con el testimonio [84]. En el capítulo dedicado a resolver las objecciones se examinan los temas

[83] Editado en London 1934, con una introducción de J. R. Mott.

[84] O. c., p. 129 ss. Coloca el origen histórico de la famosa « consigna » en el año 1886.

que hoy se han unido a la evangelización como la política o la sociología. El autor resiste a todas estas nuevas tendencias [85].

La presencia, en ciertos ambientes rurales de las misiones, de personas dotadas de un carisma especial de apostolado misionero, ayudó a reflexionar sobre los « evangelistas » de la primitiva Iglesia: Dios, « a unos ha constituido apóstoles, a otros profetas y a otros evangelistas » (Ef 4, 11). Nuestro autor define al nuevo « evangelista » como una persona especialmente unida a Cristo con la conciencia de ser enviada por El; trabaja en comunión con los otros bajo la fuerza del Espíritu, y superando los moldes estáticos de una parroquia o iglesia constituida, sale fuera para anunciar a Cristo. El evangelismo es diferente del ministerio pastoral o el de la enseñanza. La Iglesia tiene obligación de crear estas comunidades de evangelistas y « enviarlas fuera para predicar la palabra de Dios donde aún no ha sido oída ». « El trabajo por la extensión es la mejor garantía de conservación de una Iglesia » [86]. De esta forma, el concepto de evangelización se ha enriquecido otra vez con un nuevo matiz o dimensión, la *carismática.*

Para el año 1935, el término *evangelismo* substituyó la palabra *evangelización* dentro del vocabulario misionero. Cuando se preparaba el Concilio Mundial Misionero de Tambaram, se repartió en circulación privada un volumen titulado *Studies in Evangelism* [87]. Del libro todo es interesante. Por él sabemos que ya en el 1932 se había celebrado en Nagpur un « Retreat on Evangelism », que puede considerarse punto de partida del nuevo movimiento. El evangelismo viene definido: « la presentación de Cristo, El mismo es Evangelio, con las palabras, hechos y ejemplos de todas las fuerzas cristianas de India a todo el pueblo de India, de forma que los hombres puedan entrar en contacto vivo con El, y aceptar la salvación que Dios ofrece en El » [88]. El artículo más interesante es de Mott que ofrece 25 definiciones del « evangelismo » recogidas de ambientes universitarios o mi-

[85] O. c., p. 143 ss.

[86] O. c., cap. X.: « Evangelism — Its Place and Power », p. 163 ss. Muy interesante el artículo de E. T. PERRY, *Evangelism: a type of work or a quality of living?* « International Review of Missions », 22 (1933) 62 ss.

[87] *Studies in Evangelism,* ed. de W. PATON, London 1938. Algunos capítulos como los de K. S. Latourette y el de J. R. Mott, pasaron más tarde al vol. III de las actas de Tambaram (ver nota 91).

[88] *Studies in Evangelism,* p. 77.

sioneros. « Para mí, dice un obispo chino, el evangelismo es la obra de presentar todo el Evangelio cristiano con palabras y hechos, al hombre y su sociedad con el objetivo definido de convertir al hombre en un hijo de Dios y a su sociedad en el Reino de los cielos » [89]. El evangelismo ya supera el carácter puramente individual. « Es todo el Evangelio, primero un hecho personal, y siempre un hecho social. El hombre no puede vivir aisladamente. El evangelio sale al encuentro de las necesidades sociales y sus problemas » [90].

Por fin se celebró en Tambaram, Madrás, el Concilio Mundial Misionero, 1938. El volumen tercero de las actas recoge todos los trabajos relacionados con el « Evangelismo » [91]. En este Concilio se logró ya perfectamente la unión entre Iglesia y Evangelización. Podemos recordar las conclusiones de la sección IV: « The Place of Church in Evangelism » [92]. « The World Evangelism is the God-give task of the Church », su contenido se centra en Cristo Señor; no tiene nada que ver con el colonialismo u otra forma de dominación; « Essentially Evangelism is the instrument whereby the living God through His Holy Spirit makes His impact upon the spirits of men »; lleva consigo una « transformación social y la realización de fines como la justicia, la libertad y la paz », de hecho « no puede separar su función profética de las condiciones sociales »; es una obra propia de la Iglesia, primero de los « ordained leaders », luego de los « full-time evangelists » que son un don del Espíritu y están orientados a la misión; en este contexto se habla de la participación de la juventud y de las mujeres.

Y llegamos a la década de los años 40, protagonista de la tragedia de la segunda guerra mundial. Pasado el conflicto se despertó dentro de los ambientes misionológicos una gran interés por el tema de la evangelización. Hay que confesar que lo característico de esta etapa es una tendencia hacia la novedad y hacia cierto radicalismo. Estas notas se traslucen en las reu-

[89] O. c., cap. IV: « What is Evangelism? A Symposium, edited by J. R. Mott », pp. 46-57; el texto citado en la pag. 48.

[90] O. c., p. 54; son las conclusiones de J. R. Mott.

[91] *International Missionary Council Meeting at Tambaram, Madras, 1938*, London 1939; vol. III: « Evangelism » donde se recogen tres capítulos de la o. c.: *Studies in Evangelism.*

[92] O. c., p. 420 ss.

niones del Concilio Internacional Misionero celebrado en Whitby (Toronto), 1947 [93].

Como representante de esta época podemos fijarnos en J. C. Hoekendijk. En el año 1950 escribía: « tenemos necesidad de una nueva visión del evangelismo, desembarazarnos (disentanglement) de todos los complejos seculares y secretas ideologías, redescubriendo el sentido bíblico del evangelismo » [94]. La evangelización no puede consistir en transmitir la « christianitas » o ese complejo cultural bien estructurado dominado por la Iglesia. Se advierte un empeño en desligar el concepto de evangelización de la Iglesia-institución. La Iglesia sólo existe cuando evangeliza [95]. La novedad principal es la dimensión escatológica de la evangelización, tarea propia de los últimos días inaugurados por el Mesías, « cuando el evangelio debe ser proclamado a todos los hombres, y entonces será el fin ». Pero todavía vivimos en la época de la esperanza. « Evangelism can be nothing but the realization of hope, a function of expectancy » [96]. La nueva concepción de la evangelización abre el camino a la teología de la esperanza que se desarrollará años más tarde. A la vez, la evangelización destruye toda injusticia que pueda oscurecer el horizonte de la esperanza. Su contenido es el anuncio del *shalom* o paz mesiánica, que debe ser vivida en comunidad (koinônía) y demostrada con el testimonio del servicio (diakonía) al mundo. Estas ideas fueron recogidas con entusiasmo en la Asamblea del Consejo Mundial de las Iglesias (Uppsala, 1968), reduciendo, con todo, el contenido de la evangelización a una dimensión demasiado social, horizontal [97].

[93] Vel la edición de C. E. RANSON, *Renewal and Advance. Christian Witness in a Revolutionary World*, London 1948.

[94] *The Church inside out*, London 1967, p. 18; el primer capítulo es reproducción de un artículo: *The Call to Evangelism*, « International Review of Missions », 39 (1950) 162-175; ver también, *The Evangelisation of Man in Modern Mass Society*, « The Ecumenical Review », 3 (1950) 133-140.

[95] O. c., p. 40: la Iglesia « *happens* in so far as it actually proclaims the Kingdom to the world ».

[96] O. c., p. 20. El influjo de Hoekendijk sobre Moltmann y su Teología de la Esperanza es claro. A veces Moltmann lo cita expresamente.

[97] O. c., pp. 23-29. Sobre el *shalom* en Uppsala, *Drafts for Sections, prepared for the Fourth Assembly of the WCC*, Uppsala 1968, p. 28 ss. Un estudio de esta tendencia en nuestro art.: *La nueva escuela del Shalom*, « Misiones Extranjeras », 16 (1969) 416-430.

Hoekendijk ha encuadrado la evangelización dentro de un esquema que pronto adquirirá gran relieve. Por una parte ha intentado separarla de la Iglesia-institución, ligándola a una nueva concepción dinámica de la esperanza, y por otra parte ha buscado los contactos con la situación política y real de los hombres. Estas serán precisamente las categorías con las que algunos recientes autores han intentado interpretar exclusivamente el concepto de evangelización.

Ecumenism and evangelization

J. L. WITTE, S. J.

INTRODUCTION

The vital life of the Church might be likened to the action of the human heart in its two phases of contraction and expansion. According to this metaphor ecumenism might be viewed as the contraction of the heart, evangelization as its expansion. As the vitality of human life depends on the rhythmical sequence of these two phases of the heart, so in a Church that is truly alive there will be the essential relationship between ecumenism-evangelization and evangelization-ecumenism.

When this metaphor is translated into more theological language, *ecumenism* can be seen to deal with the ecclesiological problem of conserving or restoring full unity among all the followers of Christ, while *evangelization* is concerned with the proclamation of the good news to the whole world.

This essential relationship is evident in that ecumenism creates the right condition for accomplishing the essential evangelizing task of the Church: proclaiming the Gospel to every creature and building up the Body of Christ among all who accept the Gospel message.

The relationship between ecumenism and evangelization also reflects the relationship between Church and World.

The Church exists only for the salvation of the world, and yet the Church, as the eschatological sign of the Kingdom of God, is more than just an instrument. It is indispensable until the end of time as guarantee for our Christian hope in the risen Lord. Though there is in the Church the unity given by the Lord himself, the unity *as our task* will always be fulfilled imperfectly. Hence, there will always be some lack of unity. In this sense ecumenism is a task for all times, until Christ returns.

We admit that the more common, technical sense of ecumenism, as a movement merely to overcome the separation between Churches is somewhat widened; we see in ecumenicity a constant quality of the Church pushing to activity (ecumenism), but we shall develop the reason for this later. Likewise, evangelization, considered as expansion of the Church, might seem at first not to cover fully the exact sense of the word. Yet, evangelization to those « outside », which corresponds more immediately to the idea of « expansion of the heart », is so intimately linked with « evangelization » to those « within », that both might be expressed by the same metaphor. In his first letter St. Peter gives a sublime « evangelization » to those «within », which reveals the unity of both aspects: « In your hearts reverence Christ as Lord », he says. « Always be prepared to make a defence to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; and keep your conscience clear » (I Peter 3, 15-16). To give account of our hope to those « outside » presupposes an account to those who are « within », so that their testimony be sincere and authentic.

Though our comparison may not apply in all particulars — as is the case in all metaphors — still it may serve well as a broad structure for our paper. We shall treat the ecclesial realities behind the concepts « ecumenism as contraction », and « evangelization as expansion », considering both the past and present situation of the ecumenical movement, both outside and inside the R. C. Church. In this effort we shall draw heavily on Holy Scripture and Vatican II. With this methodology we hope to find a norm for solving some actual problems concerning the relationship between ecumenism and evangelization [1].

[1] We write this article during the 1974 Synod of Bishops on « The Evangelization of the Modern World » and it will be published between this Roman Synod and the Fifth Assembly of the W. C. C. on the theme « Jesus Christ Frees and Unites, » to be held in December 1975 in Nairobi. So our text needs to be interpreted according to these dates.

I. Ecumenism as movement in order to deepen or to restore full unity.

1. *The concept of Ecumenicity.*

Ecumenism has the task to unite with God's help all Christians in the one, universal Church which is in continuity with the Church founded by Jesus Christ and tends towards the eschatological fulfillment. If we look to this task-description from an etymological point of view, the accent has to be placed on the identity of this universal Church with the Church founded by Jesus Christ.

A short reflection on the history of the concept « ecumenical » will suffice to justify this interpretation [2]. I suppose as a matter of common knowledge the etymology from « the inhabited earth », in which sense « ecumenical » is used several times in the Old and New Testament. In Hebr. 2, 5 a religious sense enters: ἡ οἰκουμένη ἡ μέλλουσα (the future « oikoumenè »). The Church Fathers applied this word « oikoumenè » several times to the earthly Church, sign of the future Reign of God. So it may be understood that the sense becomes the one, universal, visible Church, practically coextensive with the Roman Empire, though with the connotation of the wholeness of this Church, visible and invisible. Thus it points also to the orthodoxy of faith. It remains a rather static concept, never used for a local Church, nor as a rule (there are some exceptions), to indicate the dynamic tension in the Church to go out and win the world for Christ. But it was applied to the function of patriarch and to Councils, representing the faith of the whole Church, and in a similar way to some Church Fathers. In the third and fourth century, with the passage from periods of persecution to full freedom and the consequences of mixing with the multitude of pagans, this historical situation induced several Church Fathers to an accentuation of the restricted sense

[2] No survey is here intended. We will accentuate only some aspects which seem to be somewhat forgotten today. Cf. for a more complete history: W. A. Visser 't Hooft, *The Meaning of Ecumenical* (*The Burge Memorial Lecture*) (London: S. C. M. Press, 1953); H. van der Linde and J. L. Witte, S J., « La Noción ecumenica y el movimiento ecumenico en la Iglesia Católica, » in L. Alting von Geusau, a. o., *La Iglesia Catolica y el Movimiento ecumenico* (Barcelona: Ed. Estela, 1964), pp. 36-61.

of the word « oikoumenè ». So, as before, the « inhabited world » of the Roman Empire was opposed to the barbaric country *outside* of it, the Church, as « ἡ οἰκούμενη », was now opposed to the pagan world all around the Christians.

To complete the picture, the Church Fathers emphasized the biblical demarcation line between Christian world and pagan world, drawn by baptism. Indeed, St. Paul had indicated several times the opposition between the community of the faithful and the pagan world: cf. Col. 4, 5; I Thess. 4, 12; I Tim. 3, 7; I Cor. 5, 12; 6, 1, and also 6, 6. Sometimes the world of the pagans is indicated as: οἱ ἔξω, those outside! There can be no doubt that for Paul the line of separation is indicated by baptism in the faith received. But the same Paul insisted more than any other apostle on the universal mission of the Church for the whole of humanity. This fact could not escape, of course, the attention of those Church-Fathers. However, when they tried to express this missionary aspect of Paul's vision of the world, they generally did not use the word « ecumenical », but « *catholic* »[3]. « *Ecumenical* » never had in its long Roman-Catholic and in Orthodox tradition until modern times the connotation of dynamic force to win the world for Christ. « *Catholic* » had such connotation nearly from the beginning in the 2nd century, as the fulness of grace and truth of Christ is universally present and active in the « Catholic » Church. In the 3rd century we find the double accent, both a quantitative and qualitative catholicity. In the 4th century the richness and dynamism of this feature of the Church flourished in the doctrine of Saint Augustine, giving an interpretation of Catholicity much richer than his one-sided accent on geographical extension in the anti-donatist battle might suggest. St. Augustine knows very well about qualitative catholicity and points again and again to the foundation of catholicity in God's will of *universal salvation*, realized by the building up of one People of God, united in Christ[4].

It appears therefore that in the concept of *catholicity* the

[3] Cf. the excellent study of W. BEINERT, *Um das dritte Kirchenattribut; die Katholizität der Kirche im Verständnis der evangelisch-lutherischen und römisch-katholischen Theologie der Gegenwart*, Bd. I, Kap. 2, Der Begriff « katholisch » in der Patristik, pp. 36-77, esp. pp. 51-64 and 70 (Essen: Serie Koinonia, Bd. V, 1964).

[4] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 55-64.

accent lies on the « plèroma of Christ » present and active in the one Church of Christ by which she encompasses the whole world and expresses the fulness of the true doctrine of Revelation. In the doctrine of the Church Fathers this fulness also had several times a connotation of exclusiveness. Yet, the foundation of catholicity in God's will of universal salvation saved this concept generally from an exclusivistic rigidity. Augustine's extension of the concept of catholicity to universal space and time together led in the 5th century to the interpretation of Vincent of Lerins concerning catholicity as the guarantee of continuity in tradition.

In the concept of *ecumenicity*, however, the accent lies on extension in space. « Relating to the inhabited world » remains throughout the period of the Church Fathers and the Middle Ages the fundamental sense of « ecumenical » (though the term in the west is less and less used). Theologically, « ecumenicity » is seen as a gift of Christ to his Church by which this Church founded by Christ in unity and growing out to occupy the whole inhabited world, will conserve its identity through space and time, and thus be clearly distinguished from the pagan world outside of it. The later great Church separations, resulting in the separated Orthodox Churches and the Protestant Churches, created an anomalous situation by which the gifts of Christ, though not destroyed, received a new accent on aspects hitherto less stressed.

In the Orthodox Churches « ecumenical » retained more or less the original sense of universality in extension and applied also to universal representation (« ecumenical Council »; « ecumenical Patriarch »; « ecumenical Church Fathers »). « Catholic » retained in the East the richer sense we have explained, though the accent on the dynamic aspect diminished, partly because of political circumstances.

In the Protestant Churches « ecumenical » was used, already in the 16th century, by pure mistake as an equivalent of « catholic »[5]. A better knowledge of the history of both concepts

[5] In the Latin text of « The Book of Concord, » Nikolaus Selnecker gave to the three Creeds of the Old Church, accepted by the Lutherans, the title, taken from the *Rituale Romanum*, « Tria Symbola Catholica, » but he added after « catholica, » « *sive* oecumenica. » And so it remained until today. It may have helped the choice of the word « ecumenical » in the second half of the nineteenth century to qualify the movement for

would have prevented such an identification, as may be clear from the exposition already given. Yet, the fact is that this confusing identification is to be found also in the ecumenical movement, started in the 2nd part of the 19th century. Oliver Tomkins wrote in the Preface to his book, *The Wholeness of the Church*: « There was once a word which would have done the work I want « ecumenicity » to do, — a word to describe the wholeness of the Church, — the word « catholicity » (p. 9). He then points out that the difficulty was that « catholic » has become the proper qualification of the Roman Church. He adds: « When a word was needed in our own time to describe the attempt to reach the wholeness or « catholicity » of the Church, men turned to another ancient Christian word and spoke of the ecumenical movement » [6].

Tomkins showed some insight into the different meaning of « ecumenicity » and « catholicity » in their historical development; but nevertheless he pleaded for the substitution of « catholicity » by « ecumenicity », for understandable reasons. Many others accepted this substitution without any insight in the historical differences. They may therefore easily pass to other interpretations. In this fashion has originated the term « wider ecumenism », with which we have to occupy ourselves later. Looking to the past might have prevented such a shift of meaning.

2. *Confrontation with absolute Secularization.*

Looking to the past, however, should not be a pretext to avoid confrontation with the difficult present and future. All Christian Churches need to be keenly aware that they have to withstand in this modern world the challenge of an absolute secularization. In this situation, one could try to escape confrontation by repeating for the faithful only the old confessions of faith and by insisting on their obligatory character. Do you think that that will do it for young people today? One could also perceive that the danger for our catholic faith in this regard

unity of all Christians. (Others think that this movement took it over from Zinzendorf, but that would not exclude the origin in Selnecker's mistake.)

[6] OLIVER TOMKINS, *The Wholeness of the Church* (London: S. C. M. Press, 1949), pp. 9-10.

is not only coming from the outside (from non-Christian religions, from personalistic humanists and from communists) but also from within our Church itself. After all, Roman-Catholics live in the same world with all other people — a world in which man dominates nature ever more and in which it becomes precisely therefore ever more difficult to retain the spiritual and moral control of nature. Our faithful are not immune to this modern situation. They ask themselves (as others do): where is my place in this world 'come of age' and where is God's place? That does not mean yet an absolute secularization denying a transcendent being, which governs the world. But it does mean the admitting of a greater autonomy of the profane world, than Christians of all Churches were accustomed to admit in the past. Greater ... to what extent? If the challenge of absolute secularization is common to all the Churches — as it is — have we not all therefore to cooperate in building up the right answer, not only as a defence against secularism, but positively to guarantee the spiritual and moral control of nature for the benefit of the whole of humanity. Such a christian renewal of all Christian Churches, in confrontation with modern times, includes also a reflection on our Church tradition. We can only be valuable partners in the dialogue, if we know well our own tradition, so biblically founded that we can produce 'old and new' from both together for the benefit of all. But in dialogue and cooperation we will also discover the values of other Christian traditions for the problems we have to face and it will be only a gain, if we include the just evaluation of other traditions in the faithfulness to our own. Thus serious reflection on our own Church tradition is not what causes deadlock in our ecumenical relationship. That would be the case only if stress on our own Church-tradition would involve the *exclusion* of the ecclesial character of any other Church-tradition.

Therefore, the fundamental question is this: Is the unicity of the Roman-Catholic Church *exclusive*?

3. *The Openness of Vatican II Ecclesiology.*

We have to formulate here the right and honest answer to the simple looking, but complicated question: How unique is the Roman-Catholic Church? In past centuries many times the

answer has been given: The R. C. Church is unique in an absolute and exclusive sense. However, long before Vatican II, many R. C. theologians denied this absolute and exclusive sense, though affirming steadfastly the uniqueness of the R. C. Church. They had to determine then to what extent the R. C. Church is unique and what the consequences are for the evaluation of other Churches. It is the great merit of Vatican II to have given a clear, though sometimes tentative answer, to both the problem of uniqueness and of the evaluation of other Churches.

The Council was fully aware that on this point it was touching a very important but also very delicate point of Catholic doctrine. On the one hand the R. C. Church has always believed that the oneness of the Church has not been destroyed by separations, but still exists in the one and unique R. C. Church. On the other hand the R. C. Church became more and more aware that one of the fundamental hindrances to real progress in ecumenical relationship is the interpretation of the unicity of the R. C. Church in an *exclusive* sense. The sensitiveness of the W. C. C. on this point was clearly demonstrated in 1973 by the reactions of World Council authorities to the publication of the « Declaration 'Mysterium Ecclesiae', in defence of the Catholic doctrine on the Church against errors of the present day » (5th of July, '73). Though this Declaration was especially directed against the theology of Küng about infallibility, nearly all the reactions from protestant and catholic sides were directed against its first chapter, treating the Unity and Unicity of the Church. There were negative reactions of such highly responsible personalities as the Secretary General of the W. C. C., Philip Potter [7], and the General Secretary of Faith and Order, Lucas Vischer. For our article the negative reaction of Dr. Lucas Vischer is the important one. He remarked in his Report to the Central-Committee-meeting that all Churches have as their starting point for ecumenical activity that they àre what they àre. He then went on to say: « But then they must also include the other Churches, *their* tradition and *their* situation too, in this process of reflection ... It would ... be easy to quote many church statements which fail to do justice to these questions.

[7] Dr. Potter, « Report of the General Secretary, » *Ecumenical Review*, XXV (1973), 420.

One example among many is the recently published 'Declaration of the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith' » [8].

We have to admit, I think, that the criticism of Lucas Vischer was right. It could have been expected indeed that the « Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith » would not have treated the problem of unity and unicity of the Church, without at the same time giving a well-balanced statement about the relationship between the unicity of the Church and the positive evaluation of other Churches and ecclesial Communities. The question: « How unique is the R. C. Church? » cannot be separated from the other: « And what about the other Churches? » It is precisely because this Declaration did not enter into the problem of the ecclesiological status of the other Churches, that the *suggestion* is given that the R. C. Church defends an *exclusive* unicity of the Church instead of an inclusive one.

However it is not more than a suggestion, corroborated by some disputable formulations (which we must consider later) and by a most unhappy unofficial note to this document, distributed at the official Vatican Press Conference, dedicated to this Declaration [9] It might be useful to clarify the sense of some important Council texts by comparing them for a moment with the suggestion of exclusivity obiectively expressed in the words of the Declaration.

The first chapter, entitled « The Oneness of Christs' Church », starts with the exposition of the unicity of the R. C. Church in some well-selected parts of « Lumen Gentium », n. 8, culminating in the phrase: « And this Church of Christ, constituted and organized in this world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and the bishops in union with that successor ». Here the cited phrase of « Lumen Gentium » is broken off. The broken off part says:

[8] Dr. L. Vischer, « The Unity of the Church. A Report to the Central Committee, » *Ecumenical Review*, XXV (1973), 488.

[9] This anonymous note (published in *L'Osservatore Romano* of July 6) dares to say that the fulness of truth and grace « which the R. C. Church possesses is autonomous in relation to the many really Christian elements which are to be found with the separated brethren of the diverse Christian denominations, » and that « *therefore* the Church of Christ subsists one and undivided in the Catholic Church » (italics ours).

« although many elements of sanctification and of truth can be found outside of her visible structure. These elements, however, as gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, possess an inner dynamism toward Catholic unity ». By omitting this part the sense of « subsists in » is obscured. It seems now to be perfectly identical with « is », while in the Council-text « subsists in » was deliberately introduced instead of « is » (as the proposed text had), to indicate that there is no strict identity between the « one Church of Christ » (about which the 7 foregoing numbers of « Lumen Gentium » were speaking) and the R. C. Church [10]. Therefore it is of critical importance not to leave out in this phrase the reference to « many elements of sanctification and of truth » outside the R. C. Church. — It is not sufficient that they follow afterwards in another context. — That these elements are not exclusively directed towards the R. C. Church, but are taken up also in the relative totality of Church-elements, proper to the separated Churches, is indicated in L. G., n. 15, where it is said of separated Christians, that « they are consecrated by baptism, through which they are united with Christ. They also recognize and receive other sacraments within their own Churches or ecclesial Communities ». For the Orthodox and some other Communities there was added here: « Many of them rejoice in the episcopate, celebrate the Holy Eucharist, and cultivate devotion toward the Virgin Mother of God ». This ecclesial character of the other Churches and ecclesial Communities is still further developed and explicited in the Decree on Ecumenism, n. 3, 15 and 22, where there can be no doubt that the Church-elements they have, are also proper to these Churches [11].

Two strongly formulated conclusions, starting with the solemn decision « The followers of Christ are therefore not permitted ... », wind up the first chapter of the Declaration. The last conclusion is the most important one: « Nor are they free to hold that Christ's Church nowhere really exists today and that it is to be considered only as an end which all Churches and ecclesial communities must strive to reach ». It would be false to say that Orthodox or Protestant Churches hold that opinion [12], but it might express the opinion of some extremists both on the Catholic and the non-Catholic side; to this extent it is a useful admonition. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten, that the Church is « one interlocked reality which is comprised of a divine and a human element » (L. G., n. 8). The human element means the changing, historical element, which includes continuity, but by which the Church is always *also* on the way to become what it is already. The Church *is* one, but strives to realize better its oneness, damaged, though not destroyed, by the separations. But the falsity would be to consider it *only* as « an end ... to reach ».

A similar remark has to be made about the first conclusion which states: « The followers of Christ are therefore not permitted to imagine that Christ's Church is nothing more than a collection (divided, but still possessing a certain unity) of Churches and ecclesial communities » (p. 7, English ed.).

Indeed, Christ's Church is much more than an arbitrary enumeration of Churches. It is « the one Church of God » or of Jesus Christ, which is realized in a unique way in the R. C. Church and nevertheless is *also* realized analogically in other Churches and ecclesial Communities. That means that there is in this historical, anomalous situation of separated Churches in imperfect communion with the R. C. Church, an ecclesiological balance, which cannot be upset without falsifying the actual situation. Every disturbance of this balance, be it on the side of an *exclusive* R. C. Church, or be it in putting all the Churches on *one level*, is a falsification. The falsity lies in that « nihil aliud », applicable to both exaggerations.

[10] The Theological Commission justified the change of « is » to « subsists in » with the remark: « Loco, est dicitur, subsistit in, ut expressio melius concordet cum affirmatione de elementis ecclesialibus quae alibi adsunt » (Schema Const. « De Ecclesia, » 1964, ad hunc textum).

[11] In n. 3 and n. 22 we find also a small, but important correction on *Lumen Gentium*, n. 15, insofar as instead of « baptism, through which they are *united* with Christ, » is said « are *incorporated* into Christ, » a formulation that still was rejected during the discussions in the Theological Commission about *Lumen Gentium*, n. 15. — Cf. for the « being proper » to these separated Churches: p. 202-203 of this article.

[12] For the Orthodox Church, cf. G. Florovsky, « The Ethos of the Orthodox Church, » *Ecumenical Review*, XII, 2 (1961), 186. For the Lutheran Churches, cf. *Conf. Aug.*, art. 7. For Calvinistic Churches, cf. Calvin, « Le Catéchisme de l'Eglise de Genève, 1542, qu. 93, 94, 97, 100, in Niesel (ed.), *Bekenntnisschriften und Kirchenordnungen der nach Gottes Wort reformierten Kirche*, Zürich, p. 12.

A short reflection on the Council-texts, especially on those corresponding to texts of the cited Declaration, may confirm that our interpretation is conformable to the text and intention of the Council. — This is not to say however that the Declaration is in conflict with the Council, but only that it emphasized for understandable pastoral preoccupations one side of the picture (without denying the other side). It is only a lost change to demonstrate clearly to the whole world and to the somewhat doubting Church that Church authorities still defend the renewal of ecclesiology started by Vatican II. — « Lumen Gentium » starts from the very beginning with the description of the universal Church, not of its structures and government, but of its nature as « sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind ». A union and a unity produced « by her relationship with Christ, the light of all nations » (n. 1). Can it be said more ecumenically and more inclusively? Then the concept is developed that the Church is the one Church of God, which is « a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit » (n. 4). Here is stressed the *divine* element of the Church. But this people has to be realized in history. Thus the *human* element enters in. It appears then that the Church is not yet the Kingdom of God; it is only « on earth the initial budding forth of that kingdom » (n. 5). The Church appears to be a « complex reality » and a still growing sign of the reality that will come at the end. But the sign is already there as a continuing, indestructable reality. Then there follows the accent on the Mystical Body of Christ, created by the communication of Christ's Spirit to all believers and the sacramental union with the risen Lord by baptism; this union is intensified by the Holy Eucharist (n. 7). Yet the Church of God is also « a tract of land to be cultivated », « the edifice of God » to be completed, the « temple of God », about which Peter says that « as living stones we here on earth are being built up along with this City » (n. 6).

So in these first 7 numbers the Church of God is described in its universality in unity and its development, but always under a deductive point of view: the Church coming down from above in our earthly reality. Against this background we have to see the following phrase in which the Council moves from this universal Church of God to the historical reality of

the R. C. Church and the other Churches, saying: « This Church, constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, ... although many elements of sanctification and of truth can be found outside of her visible structure ». This statement and its history have influenced greatly the Decree on Ecumenism, the Const. « Gaudium et Spes » and several Declarations. They influenced also the description of the Church as the People of God, « moving forward through trial and tribulation », but nevertheless « strengthened by the power of God's grace promised to her by the Lord » (n. 9). Theologically this change from former positions was made possible by the growing consciousness of the historical and dynamic character of the Church. The Church was no longer seen as a static, one-for-all fixed reality, admitting only small accidental changes in the course of history; but it was seen as a gift of God, received in faith by a human society, and therefore composed of a divine and an ever changing and yet continuing human element. Therefore it had to realize itself ever anew, without destroying continuity, under the ever present actual guidance of the Holy Spirit. This means that the Church has to be faithful not only to the past but also to the present and to the eschatological future. Of course, the Church knew about this threefold faithfulness long before Vatican II: but the new element is a shift in accent towards the present and the future. The Council realized that the damage caused to Church unity by the separations from the R. C. Church was on the one side more serious than an accidental change, on the other less radical than was supposed in the past. It was more serious than an accidental change because the separated Christians were not only some individuals leaving the Church; rather the separation frustrated the realization of the catholicity of the R. C. Church in many nations. In this regard we should remember the tension between unity and catholicity: the Churches may not strive at catholicity, at the expense of unity, nor at unity to the detriment of catholicity. On the other side the damage was less radical in that the originally given unity within the R. C. Church was not destroyed, nor the unity with the separated parts, nor was the design of God for the future to unite all Christians under the Head, Jesus Christ, given up.

This new consciousness led up to the formulation of the

Church of God as « subsisting in » the R. C. Church and to the acknowledgement of the many Church elements existing, outside of it, — an anomalous situation, further worked out in all its consequences for the relation to the other Churches in the Decree on Ecumenism and in some other documents, This amounts to a change in the obiect of ecclesiology.

We can now agree what the Declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith says is quite right: It is not true, that Christ's Church is *nothing more* than a collection of Churches and ecclesial Communities; nor that Christ's Church nowhere really exists today and is to be considered *only* as an end which all Churches and ecclesial Communities must strive to reach. But we can also affirm that it is equally right to say: It is not true that Christ's Church is *nothing more* than the R. C. Church, nor that Christ's Church *exclusively* subsists in the R. C. Church and that it *not at all* is to be considered as an end which all Churches and ecclesial Communities must strive to reach. Both these statements express together the complex reality that is « the Mystery of the Church » in its historical realization, and that therefore its ecclesiology should try to express.

All Churches and ecclesial Communities are in some way *included* in the object of ecclesiology and a tract of ecclesiology which would in principle treat *exclusively* the R. C. Church, is not fully faithful to Vatican II (though it is true that the only Church in full sense is the R. C. Church). It is also a pity that the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in citing some statements from the Decree on Ecumenism, out of context [13], has not cited the most important text in relation to the acknowledgement of the ecclesial status of the other Churches and ecclesial Communities. After enumerating in a constructive order for nearly a whole page all the Church elements which build up the separated Churches and ecclesial Communities and which there show themselves to be fruitful, the Decree on Ecumenism concludes: « It follows that these separated Churches

[13] Within the framework of our article it does not seem possible to justify in full length this remark. We refer therefore for this full justification to the excellent article of E. LANNE, O. S. B., « Le Mystère de l'Eglise et de son Unité », *Irenikon*, XLVI (1973), 303-309. — The whole article goes from p. 298 to p. 342.

and Communities, though we believe they suffer from defects already mentioned, have by no means been deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation. For the Spirit has not refrained from using them as means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fulness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church » (Decree, n. 3). This can only mean that the R. C. Church acknowledges that the Holy Spirit is *present* in the separated Churches and ecclesial Communities, working through them as instruments for the sanctification of their members, using their ministers and their authorities, notwithstanding the structural and other defects of these Churches and Communities. And where the Holy Spirit is present, the risen Lord is present by Him (for is not the primordial function of the H. Spirit to make Christ present in His Body? This should then mean acknowledging the real ecclesial character of these Churches and Communities. After all, it could also be said of the R. C. Church that the Holy Spirit has not refrained from using her as means of salvation. But a distinguishing note must be added: *it is therefore* that the Decree went on to say that the unity existing within the separated Churches is not yet « that unity which the Holy Scriptures and the revered tradition of the Church proclaim. For it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the all-embracing means of salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained » (Decree, n. 3). — We can conclude: this text is not intended by the Council to « illustrate » that the Church of Christ subsists in the R. C. Church, — as the Declaration of the Congregation of Faith affirms (p. 6, English ed.). Its scope is rather to explain the analogy in regard to the ecclesial status of all the separated Churches on one side and of the R. C. Church on the other, — an analogy, which includes the fact that the R. C. Church is unique as Church, but not exclusively so.

4. *Excursus on the terms « exclusive », « unique » and « inclusive ».*

A remark may be made here about my use of the terms « exclusive », « unique » and « inclusive ». « Exclusive » and « inclusive », though supposing ontological roots, have to do more with a way of thinking; « unique » with a way of being.

« *Exclusive* » has its foundation, I think, in an antagonistic attitude towards this or that reality. In sociology it is called the attitude towards an « outgroup », or what is felt as an outgroup [14]. The outgroup may be those who do not belong to our family, our tribe, our nation, our political party, our social standing, our race, our Church. The reaction against the outgroup was in history generally hostile. The group which was « exclusive » against another group was so generally out of the principle of self-protection. They felt that they had to exclude all people from the other group, in order to protect their own identity, their own culture, their own welfare and their own religion. In religious groups there enter, of course, theological reasons for exclusiveness, and these have to be weighed upon their theological value; in Christian Churches especially upon their biblical value (the ontological roots!). Christianity, believing in God's absolute sanctity, exacting absolute obedience, and believing in Jesus Christ, unique Mediator for the salvation of the whole of humanity, understands itself, not as a religion among many others, but as the unique religion to which all are called. In this sense it is exclusive. An exclusive thinker will be inclined, to deduce therefrom more or less extreme conclusions about the possibility of salvation for those who do not explicitly acknowledge Jesus Christ.

« *Unique* » is a way of being. By its high qualities, or simply by its scarceness, or rarity a person, or a group, or a thing may be « unique ». The concept in itself does not include « antagonism ». Jesus Christ is absolutely unique, but there is in Him no antagonism whatsoever, except against « sin » (not against « sinners »). « Uniqueness » is not identical with « exclusivism », nor does it ask out of necessity for an exclusivistic way of thinking.

« *Inclusive* » is in sociology a way of thinking, which in principle accepts that wellbeing cannot be realized at the cost of the other, but by giving the other the chance, and eventually the help, to realize himself, his rights and his destiny. This inclusive attitude asks therefore for an openness towards the other or the other group. Sociologically the fundament of such

[14] Cf. for the sociological aspect of our terminology: F. BOERWINKEL, *Inclusief Denken*, Bussum, P. Brand, 1972.

an inclusive attitude is that humanity forms one family and that I cannot hurt my fellow creature without harming myself. The establishing of this sociological fact is exalted by Christ to a moral law, when He said: « Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets » (Mt. 7, 12). In Christian ecclesiology a way of thinking is inclusive, when it in principle accepts that the salvation of the world — last scope for every Church — cannot be realized at the cost of another Church, but by giving the other Church the full acknowledgement of the real Church elements which it has and eventually the help to realize itself better, according to these elements, which means: to realize itself on the way to Christ and the one Church He wanted. On the other hand, also an inclusively thinking Church has to be careful not to lose its own identity. Therefore its theological reasons for inclusiveness have to be weighted in relation to their theological and biblical valute. The inclusive way of thinking, acknowledging the absolute Lordship of God over all creatures and believing in His absolute sanctity, will on the other hand accentuate God's absolute freedom which bestowed on man his human freedom, even liberating man from his slavery to sin, by the adoption of man in Christ. The inclusive thinker will especially attend to the freedom of external law, insofar in the adopted man the law is obeyed out of an internal principle, the Holy Spirit poured out in the heart of the « new man ». Ecumenical inclusiveness, however, asks for a clear line of demarcation (without which unity cannot be conserved, nor healed). The defence of the Church's identity, also by excommunication, is therefore not excluded, but it will be limited by the finality of Church authority: to liberate each of the faithful to obedience in liberty.

5. *Biblical Reflection on the Uniqueness of the Church. Introduction.*

What we have deduced from the Council texts, we will try to verify now by a brief biblical reflection. We can give only a short survey of the most important biblical elements concerning the character of the uniqueness of the Church. The whole work of redemption by Jesus Christ seems to us to be

characterized by the uniqueness of Jesus Christ Himself and by the uniqueness of his Church. As starting point, one could therefore expect a reflection on the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

Within the framework of our article, however, we have to limit ourselves to the Church. May we refer the reader for the aspect of Christ's uniqueness to the very interesting article of C. F. D. Moule, « Is Christ unique? », where the famous exegete of the New Testament defends convincingly the inclusive character of Christ's uniqueness? [15]

In a nutshell one could summarize his argumentation on the main point in the following way: According to the Gospel Jesus Christ is not only the *unique* Mediator between God and man, but He is also the *universal* Mediator between God and the totality of manhood. God's will of salvation is absolutely universal and to realize this divine design He sent his Son as Saviour for the whole world (Cf. I Tim. 2, 4-5; Tit. 2, 11). The claim of the Gospel is that Christ is absolutely unique and absolutely universal (Cf. Hebr. 2, 8-10; 4, 14 - 5, 10; 9, 28). Therefore everything in other religions that speaks to us of God, be it in the Jewish religion, or in Mohammetanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Shintoism, is all, so to say, embodied in Jesus Christ. That is true even for whatever goodness or truth is to be found in non-believers. Thus it is seen that Jesus Christ is unique in an inclusive sense. — My summary of Mr. Moule's main argument does not do full justice to all the fine nuances of his thought. We apologize for this imposed briefness. — The indicated inclusiveness might evoke the idea that we would come near in this way to some form of syncretism. Therefore it might be useful to express our idea more precisely. One can speak about a continuing process of unification in Christ. That might evoke the idea of a natural and necessary process of evolution. But we should remember that this process came only to further development by a divine intervention in the special Revelation given to the Jewish people and the full Revelation given to the new people of God in Jesus Christ. This special divine intervention guarantees the uniqueness of the Christian Revelation, as distinct from other religious values,

[15] Cf. C. F. D. Moule, « Is Christ Unique? », in C. F. D. MOULE, a. o., *Faith, Fact and Fantasy* (London: Collins Fontana Books, 1964), p. 103-125.

though it makes possible at the same time the highest possible evaluation of these others. The same divine intervention gives also the special character to the fruit which it produces: the Body of Christ, sacramentally united with and in Jesus Christ, the risen Lord. The non-Christian religions (with the exception of the Jewish religion [16]) are only rooted in Jesus Christ as the Logos and, though the grace of Christ is also working there, they are not taken up in the Body of Christ, as one, sacramentally united reality in the risen Lord.

In this lies the line of demarcation for the field of ecumenism, a line indicated by the Christian Revelation itself. — We will go back to this problem in the following section. — Our purpose in mentioning this special divine intervention and the Body of Christ was only to make clear that « inclusive uniqueness » does not mean a relativization of the Christian religion, nor an opening up to syncretism.

The Uniqueness of the Church.

The Gospel teaches us a Christ-centred universalism. This same vision guided Vatican II when it focussed the whole Constitution on the Church on the absolute uniqueness, universality and centrality of Jesus Christ [17].

The unity and unicity of the Church have their ultimate and normative reality in Jesus Christ, who founded his Church by the communication of his proper fulness of grace and truth through the Holy Spirit to all who believing in Him in his death and resurrection are incorporated into his Body [18]. The letter to the Ephesians proposes a double definition of the Church: she is not only « Body of Christ », but also « Fulness of him (Christ) who fills all in all » (Eph. 1, 23) [19].

[16] The Jewish religion could perhaps be called an incomplete form of special Revelation: it points to Christ by the special Revelation it has received, but can only be completed by the full acceptance of Christ, which St. Paul has predicted as coming before the end of times.

[17] Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 7, compared with n. 13-17; Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, n. 2 and n. 8; Declaration *Ad Gentes*, n. 1, 8 and 9.

[18] Cf. John 1, 16 17; Eph. 4, 10-13.

[19] For our interpretation of this difficult text may we refer the reader to our article « Die Katholizität der Kirche, » *Gregorianum*, XLII (1961), 201-206, 210-214. In this article (pp. 193-241) the other important texts for

The dogmatic foundation of this « fulness of Christ » may may be explained in a few words: By the assumption of Christ's human nature in hypostatic union, this human nature participates in the being-Person of the Son of God. By this communion it is so intimately within the Son, that the being-Person of the Son of God becomes the being-person of this human nature. In this way in the Person of the Son of God the two natures are immediately united. Therefore the divine activity of the Son of God always realizes itself in the work of redemption in a human form, a human activity. St. John can therefore say: « And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father » (John 1, 14). The created fulness of grace and truth in Christ is the immediate consequence of the hypostatic union of the two ntaures in the one Person of the Son. Nevertheless, looking to the human reality in Jesus Christ the fact of its historical character must also be insisted on, that is, on the unity of incarnation, death and resurrection. The incarnation is not completely finished in the birth of the child at Bethlehem. « To become man » includes the totality of the human realization. This created «πγηρώμα τοῦ χριστοῦ» was in the whole Christ from birth to resurrection and constituted him as *the* Christian Revelation. From this created fulness we all have received, grace upon grace (cf. John 1, 16).

What Christ actually communicated and communicates to his Church is this fulness of grace and truth by which the Church is constituted. Without this fulness the Church would be a merely human association. Therefore that « fulness of Christ » can be proposed, as St. Paul did, as a metaphorical definition of the Church. By thus indicating the divine element of the Church communicated to a communion of men and so entering into human history, he defined the Church. This, then, is the main dogmatic content of the letters to the Colossians and to the Ephesians.

But this communication has been realized and realizes itself continuously through the Holy Spirit. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and later on in the primitive Church

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our theme — *Eph.* 4, 13; *Col.* 2, 9; *Eph.* 4, 10; 4, 16; and 5, 25-27 — are also developed exegetically and dogmatically.

involves already the concept of « fulness » because it indicates the overwhelming gifts of Christ's grace. The Holy Spirit is not merely giving something; He is giving *in abundance.* The expression used is always: make « full of » (πληρόω; ἐπλήσθη). To Holy Mary is said: χαιρε, κεχαριτωμένη (Hail, full of grace: Luke 1, 28); about Elisabeth: καὶ επλήσθη πνεύματος ἁγίου ἡ Ἐλισαβετ (Elisabeth was filled with the H. Spirit: Luke 1, 41); so also Zachariah: Luke 1, 67. And in Acts the expression « filled with the Holy Spirit » occurs many times (e. g. Acts 1, 4 and 4, 31). This characteristic of the work of the Holy Spirit is already expressed by St. John the Baptist when he spoke to his disciples about Christ: « For he whom God has sent, utters the words of God, *for it is not by measure that he gives the Spirit* » (John 3, 34). The context shows that John the Baptist had responded to a demonstration of envy by this disciples, who said to him: « Rabbi, he who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you bore witness, here he is baptizing, and all are going to him » (John 3, 26). John the Baptist answered: « You yourself bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him » (v. 28), and he added, « He must increase, but I must decrease » (v. 30). It is clear that the following verses (31-36) are not spoken by John the Baptist, but are a theological reflection of John the Apostle on the words of the Baptist. Far from decreasing the importance of the words « for it is not by measure that he gives the Spirit », the fact that it is this Evangelist, the most intimate of Christ's disciples, who thus speaks, suggests that here we are near to the heart of the matter concerning the Spirit's work in redemption. The gift of the Spirit is abundant, and as such is opposed to every suggestion of envy concerning spiritual work done by outsiders (may we add outside our group, our nation, our Church?). In this way the Evangelist had understood the Gospel and so did the primitive Church.

St. Paul also speaks in the same line: « But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, *much more* have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ *abounded* for many » (Rom. 5, 15; remember that « for many » means « for all »). The same theme is repeated several times in ch. 5 and 6: « Superabundat gratia! »; the text says: οὐ δὲ ἐπλεόνασεν ἡ ἁμαρτία,

ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις; « where sin increased, grace abounded all the more » (5, 20). God is not giving in a frugal economical way [20].

The concept of « plèroma », in Eph. 1 and 4, expresses in the same way the abundant and total richness of Christ's gift to his Church, without any limitation on the side of Christ [21]. Just this fulness corresponds to the nature of the Church, to be instrument of salvation for the whole of humanity. Therefore, the Church of Christ cannot be seen as instrument of salvation only for the Church members or only for the elect. Rather, the Church has been created by Jesus Christ with an all-encompassing inclusiveness for the whole human race by this gift of fulness of Christ's grace and truth. It is characteristic of the Church, not that it has received *some* gifts of the Holy Spirit, but that it is constituted by the communicated fulness of Christ in its totality. The concept «πλήρωμα» is central for the problem of unicity of the Church. «Πλήρωμα» encompasses the two aspects: « abundance » and « totality ». On the other hand, « exclusiveness » is always connected with the concept « envy » (consciously or unconsciously); it is founded in antagonism against the outsider, as is illustrated in the example of the Apostle John blamed by Jesus because of his envy of a non-disciple (Luke 9, 49-50) who casted out demons in Christ's name, and in the rebuke that James and John received, when they wanted to bid fire coming down from heaven over the unhospital Samaritans: « You do not know what manner of spirit you are of » (Luke, 9, 55) [22]. The Holy Spirit is not acting by envy, nor by measure.

[20] How this idea has been developed by several early Greek Church Fathers was exposed by W. C. VAN UNNIK, « De ἀφθονία van God in de Oudchristelijke literatuur (The ἀφθονία of God in the Early Greek Literature) in *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederl. Akademie van Wetenschappen*, Afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, XXXVI, 2 (Amsterdam-Londen, 1973). He cites, e. g., (pp. 22-31): Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, the Preface of Book III; further: III 25. 5; IV 1. 2; IV 14. 2; IV 16. 5; IV 38. 3; V 24. 4; III 23. 6; and Clemens Alexandrinus, *Paedagogus* III 40. 3; *Stromata* II 18. 86. 1; V 4. 24. 2; VI 11. 90. 1; VII 2. 7. 1-2.

[21] Cf. our article « Die Katholizität der Kirche », *Gregorianum*, XLII (1961), 206-222.

[22] Many manuscripts have only: « But he (Christ) turned and rebuked them. » — There can be hardly a doubt, I think, that the words cited in our text (which many other manuscripts also added) are at least a right interpretation of the « rebuke », given by Jesus. So did the first Christian community understand their Lord: cf. *John* 3, 17 and 12, 47.

6. *Some Conclusions*:

a. It seems time now to draw some conclusions from our reflection on « πλήρωμα » and unicity. The one, universal Church of Jesus Christ (as treated in the first seven numbers of « Lumen Gentium »), is realized in the R. C. Church (« subsists in »), which is a pilgrim Church of not yet definitively redeemed sinners (with the exception of Holy Mary). Thus this earthly Church, concretely taken, is sinful, insofar as consisting of not yet definitively redeemed sinners (baptized sinners are really Church-members). Yet this earthly Church is holy to the extent that she is sanctified by the fulness of Christ, present in her and fruitful, so that she constitutes *the* full eschatological sign of the Kingdom of God. Notwithstanding the defects of the Church members, the fulness of Christ *is* in the R. C. Church and *is not limited there in its fruitfulness by the denial of any part of this fulness of grace and truth, by the Church as such.* Therefore we have to say, I think, that she is not only *an* eschatological sign, but the only full eschatological sign of the Kingdom of God. But again, this is not meant in an exclusive sense. There are other eschatological signs of the Kingdom, constituted by other Churches, intimately connected with the full sign. But these Churches in their actual structure cannot express that fulness as eschatological sign, which is proper to the R. C. Church. The historical theological method however, should warn us of the danger of a sort of pharisaistic legalism in our ecclesiology. It would be a false legalism, we think, to group all the other Churches and ecclesial Communities around our R. C. Church and to qualify them *exclusively* according to the degree of participation in the institutional elements, which we « possess » in fulness. An exclusive concentration on « institutional elements » as sign of the one true Church of Jesus Christ, would be just as wrong as any other exclusive concentration, e.g. on the Word alone. If we look together to Christ, are there not also other norms for passing judgement on closeness to Christ, and on the measure of Christian richness? Are there not faith, hope and charity and their realization in « kerugma », « koinonia » and « diakonia » of our Churches, and this, at least,

not only in institutional elements? And would these virtues and their realizations in fact always be higher in the R. C. Church than in any other Church or ecclesial Community? Vatican II wisely avoided making a judgement in this case.

However, having stated and conceded these facts, we should not diminish the importance of the institutional fulness. This fulness should be seen in the totality of sacramental unity with Christ, from which it is only one aspect, so that only by this totality the full eschatological sign of the Kingdom is constituted. Compared with grace and truth, the institutional element is of minor importance, insofar it is only the *means* for conserving continuity with the past, for guiding the « koinonia » in the present and for directing it rightly towards the future. But it is an indispensable means, — indispensable for the realization of the totality of sacramental union with Christ. The universal Church of Jesus Christ, to which the ecumenical movement tends, can never be realized without Christ's communicated *fulness* of means of salvation. The defects in structure of the separated Churches should not be considered separately, as if the incarnation of the Revelation would be completed without institutional elements, leaving it fully to our free choice, which means we would like to choose. Essential defects of structure mean objectively unfaithfulness to Christ; they have their consequences for the total union with Christ of such Churches. It would therefore be an error to consider the R. C. Church only as a Church which has quantitatively something more than others. The R. C. Church is qualitatively different from any other Church.

The fulness of means of salvation has been entrusted to this Church and *has been accepted* without limitation by the R. C. Church as such. The R. C. Church believes that she essentially has been faithful by the grace of God to this committed fulness and therefore is the continuation of the historical Church founded by Jesus Christ. In this sense the R. C. Church is unique.

But what of the historical existence of other Churches and ecclesial Communities?

b. The fulness of grace and truth is communicated to the R. C. Church and is accepted by this Church without any limitation (though with the heavy burden of human weaknesses and insufficiences and sins of its members). Nevertheless Christ and his Spirit are also present and active within the separated Churches and ecclesial Communities, communicating grace and truth, with the only limitation posed by human unwillingness (for whatever reason) to accept some Church elements (they will have also their own burden of human weaknesses, etc.). It does seem to us that we should avoid the static way of thinking about divine and human element of the Churches as about two « entia » which after their creation are united. Would it not be thus that the separated Churches and ecclesial Communities, insofar instruments of salvation, are created by Christ through the Holy Spirit in the imperfectness proper to their « human element », conditioned in so many complicated, historical and personal ways? Thus we don't think that the presence of Christ and his Spirit in a separated Church would mean that the fulness of (created) grace and truth would be present there, as this fulness is present in the R. C. Church. The increated fulness of Christ and his Spirit is present there, not the *communicated*, created *fulness*. But, we think that we have to admit an *immediate* encounter between Christ and the separated Churches. It is Christ, and he alone, who rules the R. C. Church and the separated Churches and ecclesial Communities in absolute sovereignty by his Spirit, (fruitfully, insofar as they are obedient to him). The unique position of the R. C. Church does not mean that the R. C. Church would have a sort of monopoly of the presence and activity of Christ and his Spirit. The remark of the Council that the Holy Spirit does not refrain from using the separated Churches and ecclesial Communities as means of salvation points to a positive acceptance of these Churches by Christ (what distinctions there also could be added).

c. When the Council declares about the Orthodox Churches, « Through the celebration of the Eucharist of the Lord in each of these Churches, the Church of God is built up and grows in stature » (Decr. on Ec., n. 15), we can conclude that this happens by the instrumentality of these separated Churches and their ministers. For the Word of God is never spoken in an empty world-space, nor is it directed towards a single Christian in his singleness, but it is always directed towards a community, the old or the new People of God. And

the People, as such, has to answer to God's calling. To acknowledge the Holy Eucharist as an effective Church element in these separated *Churches* means to admit that also there the human element of these Churches, as such, (therefore their ministers, together with their communion of believers, each in his role) is answering effectively to God's calling in the Holy Eucharist. And so the Church of God is built up there through the Holy Spirit and Christ's eucharistic presence, but not without the instrumentality of their ministers. The churchly character of these means of salvation in the Orthodox Churches is still underlined by the words of the Council that « the Church of God *grows* (there) in stature », pointing to the permanency of the active presence of the Holy Spirit in these Churches.

d. However, this does not deny that all these Church elements can be called at the same time *proper* to the R. C. Church, insofar as these elements were part of the common patrimony handed over from the Apostles and faithfully guarded in their fulness by the R. C. Church, as we believe. Moreover, the whole work of redemption is the execution of one plan of God, with as a special phase, the Christian Revelation. It is not a scattered activity without coherence. Christ's communication of his fulness of grace and truth to the R. C. Church and his communication of grace and truth to other Churches and ecclesial Communities are not working independently of each other. Christ's work in the other Churches is also directed towards the unification of all Churches, to build up the one, universal Church, according to the will of Christ. This one universal Church is not some entirely new Church, but will be in continuity, despite the changes required for unity, with the one Church of Christ, which subsists in the R. C. Church [23]. All Churches insofar as

[23] This does not mean that ecumenism for the R. C. Church would be only « a return » towards this same Church, as it is now, or as it was. As every historical Church, the R. C. Church has to change in many aspects and also to pass through *reformations*, not only in the conversions of individuals, but — as the Council states — « Christ summons the Church, as she goes her pilgrim way, to that continual reformation of which she has always need, insofar as she is an institution of men here on earth » (Decree on Ecumenism, n. 6); in Latin: « ad hanc perennem reformationem qua ipsa, qua humanum terrenumque institutum, perpetuo indiget »: therefore at least, *also as institution.*

they are really obedient to Christ, converge as instruments for the upbuilding of the one, universal Church, which Christ willed.

e. The anomaly of the existence of so many Churches and ecclesial Communities cannot prevent Christ from realizing the representation of the one Church of Christ concretely in the R.C. Church by the fulness of grace and truth which he has communicated and communicates to her. On the other hand, this same deplored anomaly cannot prevent Christ from realizing the representation of the one Church of Christ, though in an essentially imperfect way, in these other Churches, by the many gifts of grace and truth which *He* has communicated and communicates to these Churches. These many gifts help only for the upbuilding of the one Church of Christ to the extent that they join these Churches with the fulness of grace and truth, given to and accepted in the R. C. Church. Ontologically it is in the nature of these gifts to strive for the fulness of Christ, as it is in the nature of the fulness to attract their partial realizations. It is in this sense that we understand the phrase of the Council about « means of salvation (in separated Churches) which derive their efficacy from the very fulness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church » (Dec. on Ecum., n. 3).

f. We think that our exposition of this inclusiveness has nothing to do with a sort of « inner-Christian syncretism », nor with a « branch theory ». It may suffice here to point to the essential differences with other Churches, created by the expression of the fulness of grace and truth in the Catholic eucharistic « koinonia », in unity of faith, sacraments and government. It is this « koinonia », together with its already indicated presuppositions, which determine the R. C. Church as absolutely unique. It is this and nothing else! Therefore, inner-Christian syncretism and the branch theory are excluded. However, this « koinonia » in its fulness does not exclude the existence of other analogical « koinonias » in other Churches. If by baptism, in faith received, people are already incorporated into Christ, as St. Paul said, and have received the Holy Spirit [24], how could they not then form one « koinonia » in Christ, though it is in analogy with the full « koinonia » in the Holy Eucharist? Moreover, the

[24] Cf. I *Cor.* 12,13 and *Acts* 2, 37-38. Cf. also Decree on Ecumenism, n. 22.

Council said that the ecclesial Communities have not preserved the *genuine* and *total* reality of the eucharistic mystery. But it added: « Nevertheless, when they commemorate the Lord's death and resurrection in the Holy Supper, they profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and they await His coming in glory » [25]. How then can it be denied that the Council acknowledged an analogical « koinonia » founded in the common, and yet essentially differing, sacramental union with the risen Lord?

g. The last conclusion from the inclusiveness of the Church is its character of « diakonia », of *service*, not of domination. This characteristic has been given to his Church by the way Christ himself realized his uniqueness. Christ came not to be served, but to serve others, all men and every man, though he is already the Lord of the world. In this sense he can rightly be called the Man for others. The Council has to be the Church for others, in solidarity with the world. The « diakonia » of the Church is not an accidental activity casually added to the gathering into one « koinonia ». It is the consequence of the liberating activity of Christ. Man liberated from sin, is also liberated *towards* every fellow man i.e. he encounters every man as his « neighbour », never as his enemy, because all men are brothers and sisters, children of God, whom we all may call Abba (Father). Even the « mysterium iniquitatis » whose presence we as Christians acknowledge, cannot fundamentally change the outcome of history. The Christian has not only to fight against evil, but also to support the misery caused by evil. Thus he will prepare the new Earth by dependence on Christ. Service is in itself a consequence of inclusiveness, insofar as inclusiveness is the expression of love. There can be no doubt that this inclusiveness out of a motive of love is in Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also in the Church by the communication of Christ's fulness. It should exercise itself in service to all. In this way, the Church will make herself much more credible, especially for modern man. The case would be different, however, if inclusiveness was the expression of the will to power. Then it would come near to the exclusive view of the Church — a view, which by its own nature, drives to self-defence — and,

[25] Decree on Ecumenism, n. 22.

therefore, to the will of power, characteristics which have damaged the credibility of the Church so many times in history.

II. Evangelization as the expansion of the heart

1. « *Wider Ecumenism* » *or* « *Dialogue with the world* »?

It is widely recognized today that ecumenical activity is useful for evangelization, insofar as it may help make the Church's message more credible for the world. The one voice of all the Churches together, or at least the effort to become one voice, gives a special tone of sincerity and authenticity to proclaiming him who brought *one* message of salvation for the whole world. There is also a growing common consent that the Church's message of reconciliation and peace will be much more credible if the Churches together will be engaged in real, disinterested service for the well-being of the world. These are the common motives one heard for ecumenical co-operation and ecumenical striving for unity in the Synod of Bishops at Rome, which discussed evangelization. Yet, I think, the relationship between ecumenism and evangelization goes much deeper. The best way of discovering this deep inner relationship seems to us to start with the reflection on a misunderstanding of that relationship which becomes more and more widespread today. In the very beginning of this article we observed that by lack of historical insight, or perhaps by lack of attention, many Christians do not seem to perceive the solid roots for the old traditional interpretation of « ecumenical ». Therefore they may easily pass on to other interpretations, according to the storms, or breezes, of the day. Today the storm that arises at the awakening of the Third World — sometimes it is like a pentecostal storm, sometimes like a dangerous hurricane — pushes towards a widening of the spiritual horizons of western and Third World peoples alike. No wonder that in this ecumenical area the slogan took form: we ask for « wider ecumenism », one that comprehends in its ecumenical goal the unity of all men! From the signification of « ecumenism » there remains only the vague idea that it has something to do with a movement for a certain unity over the whole world. It does not seem to

point to a specific Christian unity, nor to indicate any limitation to its world-wideness.

S. T. Balasuriya gives the following definition of « wider ecumenism »: « Ecumenism in its wider sense is the effort of the family of God to actualize its inner Christ-given unity through the structures, relations and experiences of men on earth at any given time » [26]. This definition is full of ambiguity: « the family of God » is not the « family », regenerated by baptism according to Eph. 2, 19, but « the family of God is universal », says the author (p. 69); « its inner Christ-given unity » is not the sacramental unity in Christ, the risen Lord, but means only « that Christ has a redemptive influence on every single member of the human family » (p. 68), so that there is an « objective, supernatural relation of mankind to Jesus Christ » (p. 69). Also the formulation « structures, relations and experiences » is purposely chosen, to encompass both « ecumenism » and « wider ecumenism ». The author adds afterwards specifications « for Christians only ».

Fully acknowledging the good intentions of the author, we think that he creates confusion about the traditional and actual sense of « ecumenism ». A dangerous thing, especially in a syncretistic milieu. We shall try to question the validity of his definition by reflecting on the identity of the Church. We have already seen that « ecumenicity » is a gift of Christ to his Church by which this Church founded by Christ in unity and growing through baptism will conserve its identity through all times. At this point we have to add a new emphasis to this definition. After the great Church separations the ecumenicity of the Church is also directed towards the healing of the damaged unity, by unifying all Churches into the one Church of Jesus Christ. This means that « ecumenism » is essentially an inner ecclesiological problem. The Churches are already imperfectly united in the one Body of Christ, which « subsists » in a special way in the R. C. Church, and the first line of demarcation of this Body is baptism received in faith.

Certainly, Vatican II has laid more stress on the function of the Holy Spirit in the work of redemption than the Church

[26] S. T. BALASURIYA, « Toward a Wider Ecumenism, » in GREGORY BAUM, O. S. A. (ed.), *Ecumenical Theology, no. 2* (New York: Paulist Press Deus Books, 1967), p. 70.

was accustomed to, but this function was never separated from his relationship to Jesus Christ. It was several times repeated: the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ; he is sent by Christ and unites us with Christ. We are *Christ*ians.. Christ is *the Way,* in the deep biblical sense, of that which determines our life in scope and means. Christ is *the Truth,* which we have heard as the « Eu-aggelion », because he died and rose from death for all of us. Christ, the risen Lord, is *the Life,* into which we are already incorporated by baptism received in faith, and perfected by the Holy Eucharist. Therefore, we are Christians, « recapitulated » in Christ into one sacramental Body of Christ, a sign for the whole world of the future Kingdom of God. That is our identity.

For this reason, therefore, « the Christ-given unity » and « the family of God » are totally different concepts when applied to the Body of Christ, or when applied to the whole of humanity. Yet, I do not deny that there is a remote analogy, insofar as Christ died for all and calls every man *by his grace* to this intimate sacramental union. In the light of these data of Revelation it seems neither prudent nor wise to extend the concept of « ecumenism » to « wider ecumenism », as understood by Balasuriya and many others. But, does this mean that we must defend an introverted ecumenism? Not at all. The defenders of « wider ecumenism » are fully right in protesting against an « ecumenism » which would be nothing more than a reflection on the old traditions of their respective Churches, refining ever more their instruments for detecting still existing differences, but losing completely the perspective on evangelization to the whole world, from which the whole trial for unity started. In his lecture on « The Meaning of Ecumenical », Visser 't Hooft warns strongly against the use of « ecumenical » « in a sentimental and vague way which brings it into the bad company of latitudinarianism and syncretism ». But he concluded this lecture with the remarkable phrases: « Finally we should never allow the word ecumenical to be used in an introverted manner. It must not be isolated from the missionary and evangelistic context to which it belongs. The Christian Oikoumenè has only the right to call itself by that name if it remembers that it exists to be the salt of the earth, that is to represent ' the coming Oikoumenè ' in the midst of the ' Oikoumenè ' which

is the whole inhabited earth »[27]. The danger of latitudinarianism and syncretism should be avoided by attending to the restricted sense of « ecumenicity » as the quality of the Church by which it conserves and heals through all times its identity in the unity of the sacramental Body of Christ. But this ecumenicity should be counterbalanced constantly by realizing ever more the *catholicity* of the Church. Visser't Hooft used in this text the word ' Oikoumenè ' confusingly when he should have used ' Catholic Church ', or ' universal Church '.

In speaking about the People of God « which takes its citizens from every race », the Council stated: « This characteristic of universality which adorns the People of God is a gift from the Lord Himself. By reason of it, the Catholic Church strives energetically and constantly to bring all humanity with all its riches back to Christ its Head in the unity of His Spirit »[28]. Such is the Council's definition of « catholicity », in which the surprising words are « with all its riches ». Accordingly, just as the Decree on Ecumenism had worked out the positive evaluation of the other Churches and ecclesial Communities[29], so numbers 16 and 17 of the Church Constitution, and several Council documents corresponding to these numbers[30], worked out the positive evaluation both of the non-Christian religions « with all their riches » and of all « people of good will » with their riches. In both cases this positive evaluation was made possible by overcoming the exclusivistic vision of the Church and by a careful presentation of its inclusiveness.

In the second draft of the preparatory document for the Synod of Bishops at Rome in 1974, entitled « *De Evangelizatione Mundi huius Temporis* » we find the following definition: « By ' evangelization ' therefore is meant every activity, whereby

[27] W. A. VISSER 'T HOOFT, *The Meaning of Ecumenical* (London: S. C. M. Press, 1953), p. 28.

[28] *Lumen Gentium*, n. 13.

[29] The positive evaluation of these separated « Churches » was already suggested in « Lumen Gentium », n. 15.

[30] Cf. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*), especially ch. 3 and 4 of the First Part, and passim; Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes*); Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*); Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*).

the People of God arouses and fosters a living faith. In this activity three tasks of the Church have to be considered in particular, viz. preaching of the Word, testimony of life and administration of sacraments, because they excel among various aspects of evangelization »[31].

In this very wide sense which practically has been accepted by the Synod, evangelization is equivalent to that activity by which the catholicity of the Church is realized continuously. A comparison of the already cited Council definition of catholicity with the Synod definition of evangelization reveals this at once. Catholicity indicates the ontological quality of the Church, in which evangelization, as activity of the Church, is rooted. As ecumen*icity* is only one aspect of catholicity, so ecumen*ism* as activity is only one aspect of evangelization (in the wide sense). This aspect, be it related to the ontological quality or to activity, is the conservation and healing of the universal Church's identity through space and time. The Church had to make active her ecumenicity always and everywhere, though because of the abnormal circumstance of the ecclesial separations, this activity took on especially the character of activity for uniting separated Churches. Evangelization, as activity to realize more and more the catholicity of Christ's universal Church, comprehends many aspects, but, theologically speaking, evangelization means the pouring out of the fulness of Christ over the whole world through the activity of the Holy Spirit, who uses thereby the Church of Christ as his instrument.

Thus we are back to our point of departure: the comparison of the vital life of the Church, caused by the Holy Spirit, with the action of the human heart in its two phases of contraction and expansion. The contraction is signified by the word « ecumenism », and the expansion by the word « evangelization ». It is now clear how much the one needs the other: ecumenism without evangelization would make the Church introverted, egoistic, self-satisfied, a static Church, near to death; evangelization without ecumenism would degenerate into secularism, or syncretism; it would make the Church dynamic for a while, but under heavy losses of identity, authenticity and catholicity. The

[31] Synodus Episcoporum, De Evangelizatione Mundi huius temporis, Instrumentum laboris ..., e Civitate Vaticana (1974), Parte II, n. 26.

Church needs the double rhythmical movement. Therefore we can say that the danger of introverted ecumenism should be avoided by striving constantly for the realization of catholicity, which realization is brought about by evangelization in the wide synodical sense.

Many people today, especially among Protestants, but also among Catholics, are perturbed by the narrowness and introvertedness of official ecumenism in the face of the need of openness towards the whole of humanity. They wrestle with the problem of how to relate the unity of the Church to the unity of mankind. Especially because of the historical mistake by which ecumenicity was substituted for catholicity, they see no other solution than to widen the meaning of ecumenism, adding adjectives which meet the problems of our times. Thus such terms as « wider ecumenism », « non-ecclesiastical ecumenism », « secular ecumenism », and even « post-ecumenical Christianity », have appeared. It would have been better simply to return to the deeply rooted distinction between ecumenicity and catholicity and such terminological problems would have been easily solved. But the originators of such terms did not realize that by extending ecumenism ever more in effect they placed it outside the *history* of salvation, even in a certain sense outside history in general. Christ is the centre of the work of redemption; he is also the centre of universal history. We cannot dislocate the centrality of Christ without dislocating everything.

From the Old Testament onwards, and much more so in the New Testament, it is a question of salvation of God's People, first in a limited sense, but already with universal outlook, then on a world-wide scale. On the other hand, the calling back of men to a personal relationship of love with God can occur only through a personal decision of faith — faith in Christ our Saviour. Thus up to a point it becomes intelligible that the salvation of the whole world results from bringing together the faithful People of God into one Body, the Body of Christ. In this Body — in principle — have been taken up those human beings who, having accepted Christ in faith by a personal decision, received baptism, as sign of their incorporation in Him. But the scope of this incorporation is to make men active as one Body, one totality, for the salvation of the whole world. The first activity of this Body is to build up the eucharistic

celebration, sign of the coming Kingdom of God. This eucharistic liturgy is the outstanding means by which the faithful can express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church [32]. From the eucharistic celebration the « koinonia » of the faithful becomes active, serving other people in their « diakonia » [33].

That in a nutshell is what the Bible tells us about God's plan of redemption. « Wider ecumenism » suggests quite another plan. These « wider ecumenisms » in so many different meanings have nevertheless one good point in common: they rightly indicate that an introverted Church is a caricature of what it should be. The Church of Christ is by its nature missionary or evangelizing. It has to display such activity, not merely to become more credible for modern man, but because the dynamism of the Holy Spirit drives the Church to go out in all times, to realize ever more its characteristic trait of catholicity. If many Protestants dislike the word « catholicity », it may be because of our fault. Let us look for a better word — perhaps « evangelization » —; but let us not confuse in the one word « ecumenism » two essentially different things: Christ's gathering together of his faithful in His Body, and the way he attracts the whole of mankind to himself. The consequences would be disastrous for the right insight into the relationship between unity of the Church and unity of mankind. Therefore: not « wider ecumenism », but « dialogue with the world ».

2. *The Realization of Catholicity in Ecumenism and Evangelization.*

To realize somewhat better the importance of dialogue with the world, we will reflect more particularly on the specific argument for such dialogue given in n. 44 of the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. There it is stated in relation to the Church: « Her purpose has been to adapt the gospel to the grasp of all, as well as to the needs of the learned, insofar as such was appropriate. Indeed, this accommodated preaching of the revealed Word ought to remain the law of all evan-

[32] Cf. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, n. 2.
[33] Cf. Acts 2, 41-47.

gelization. For thus each nation develops the ability to express Christ's message in its own way. At the same time, a living exchange is fostered between the Church and the diverse cultures of people ».

« The law of all evangelization », here formulated, is « the law of all ecumenism » as well. Ecumenism in the R. C. Church has made the discovery a long time ago that one of the most important « causes » (in the sense of favouring circumstances) of the separations among Christians, was the lack of adaptation of the preaching, governing and disciplining of the Church to the diverse cultures of the people.

In the above cited text the argument for dialogue turns the other way around. It is not considered here as a benefit for the non-Christian religions, and the other groups we indicated, but as a benefit for the Church itself, always in the perspective of the better fulfillment of her essential task of evangelization.

All peoples are called to contribute to the richness of the embodied expression of the fulness of Christ, handed over to the Church. The separation from the East robbed the R. C. Church of the intimate relationship with that treasure, originated and developed in the East, from which, before the separation, « the Church of the West has amply drawn for its liturgy, spiritual tradition and jurisprudence » [34]. In a rather euphemistic formulation the Council added here: « However, the heritage handed down by the apostles was received in different forms and ways, so that from the very beginnings of the Church it has had a varied development in various places, thanks to a similar variety of natural gifts and conditions of life. Added to external causes, and to mutual failures in understanding and charity, all these circumstances set the stage for separations » [35].

[34] Decree on Ecumenism, n. 14.

[35] *Ibid.* — The Latin text is somewhat stronger: « Quae omnia, praeter causas externas, propter defectum etiam mutuae comprehensionis et caritatis separationibus ansam praebuerunt. » Cf. for the euphemistic character of this formulation: W. DE VRIES, *Orthodoxie und Katholizisunus* (Freiburg: Herder, 1965), pp. 30-65. The same author, together with some collaborators, has developed his critical vision on the « causes » of these separations at full length in his magnificent book *Rom und die Patriarchate des Ostens*, Orbis Academicus, III, 4 (Freiburg-München: K. Alber, 1963).

The separation of the bigger part of German and Anglo-Saxon peoples made the R. C. Church sociologically a Church with a Latin predomination, bereft, at least partly, from the mystical piety, together with the practical sense and intense activity of these peoples. Vatican II, reflecting on the *consequences* of the separations, stated two points: « The divisions among Christians prevent the Church from effecting the fulness of catholicity proper to her in those of her sons who, though joined to her by baptism, are yet separated from full communion with her. Furthermore the Church herself finds it more difficult to express in actual life her full catholicity in all its aspects » [36]. The whole tragedy is expressed in this small paragraph, but it is the consciousness after the fall. Because of the impossibility of realizing the fulness of catholicity in the separated Christians, and because of her own impoverishment by the mutilation caused by the separations, the R. C. Church has great difficulty in realizing her essential task to manifest to the whole world the fulness of catholicity that Christ bestowed on her. Therefore, ecumenism has « to undertake with vigor the task of renewal and reform » necessary to express better the full catholicity proper to the Church [37]. In doing so it will be a mighty aid for the evangelization of the world. The Council points to « the biblical and liturgical movements, the preaching of the word of God, catechetics, the apostolate of the laity, new forms of religious life and the spirituality of married life, and the Church's social teaching and activity » as renewals already taking place. It added optimistically: « favourable pledges and signs of ecumenical progress in the future » [38]. May we add here a personal reflection on another aspect of the admitted, actual lack of catholicity? Does not the clearly formulated description of principal cause and effect of the past separations mean a serious warning for all who occupy themselves with the evangelization today and especially with the evangelization in the Third World? We admit immediately that the Vatican Synod, insofar as it occupied itself with the problem of « indigenization » of the local Churches, was not so alarmed that any fear of a coming schism would

[36] Decree on Ecumenism, n. 4.

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] *Ibid.*, n. 6.

be justified. But we think that the problem of Africanization, Asianization, South-Americanization, proposed there is somewhat more serious than the information given — e. g. — by the *Osservatore Romano* might suggest. It seems to us that the importance of the matter can better be valued, if it is considered against the background of what happened during the past decade in the W.C.C. Already several years before the Fourth Assembly of the W.C.C. at Uppsala in 1968, communications from several former Protestant mission Churches made it clear that the indigenous Christians did not accept any longer the « Western » domination over « their » Churches. The integration of the International Missionary Council with the W.C.C. in 1961 at the Third Assembly of the W. C. C. at New Delhi had liberated these mission Churches from the national Church of the colonizing country, so that they on equal footing became member-Churches of the W.C.C. That was a first step to independence. The shock of political liberation before or after 1961 was more strongly felt in the Protestant mission Churches than in the R.C. missions, aware of the supranational character of their Church (though sometimes more in theory, than in practice). So when the Fourth Assembly gathered at Uppsala in 1968 the participants were mentally prepared for hot discussions on the « need for revolutionary change » and on sentences of the Report like, « The Churches should participate in a responsible way in movements for radical structural changes necessary to establish more justice in the society ». The Amsterdam Assembly of 1948 (the first one) introduced the idea of « responsible *society* », wherein all are responsible in freedom for the *bonum commune* of the *nation*; now at Uppsala the moderate wing extended the responsibility, asking for a « responsible *world* », but the extreme left wing radically rejected the idea of a « responsible society » as a solution for development problems. They went so far as to affirm that « there may in fact be some situations in which only the threat or use of violence can set the process of change in motion ». Participants from Latin America especially agreed with this statement of Prof. Richard Shaull [39].

[39] Cf. for the exposition of the Uppsala-Assembly: J. L. WITTE, S. J., « Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Uppsala, 4-19 July, 1968), II, *Gregorianum*, L (1969), 291-338, esp. 298-299. — For the text of Prof. Shaull, cf. W.C.C. (ed.), World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, July 12-26, 1966; Geneva, 1967, pp. 24-25.

Section III of this Assembly was dedicated to « World Economic and Social Development » and Section IV to « Towards Justice and Peace in International Affairs ». The world of economic progress and still growing poverty, especially in the underdeveloped countries, was analyzed here and sometimes vehemently discussed. Pope Paul VI had already coined the new sense of development in his lapidary phrase: « Development is the new name for peace » [40]. It was cited several times. It was explained that the true « peace », the « shalôm », can only be realized in our situation of the world by the just realization of the economical, social, cultural and religious development of underdeveloped countries, or « developing countries » as we would say now. At Uppsala the insight broke through that such a development asks for a *liberation* not only of the underdeveloped countries, but of the rich, developed countries as well, a liberation from their prejudices, their feeling of superiority, their self-consciousness as possessors of the right solution for economical, social, cultural and religious problems in every part of the world. For « Western *Christians* » such a liberation includes also a conversion, the acknowledgement of culpability, also on the part of their *Churches* of the imperialistic way of Christianization, as the expansion of their « Western Churches » to the so-called « missionary countries. » Such ideas broke through, but were far from being generally accepted. It is the lack of this « conversion » in « Western Christians, » together with a rapidly growing irritability on the side of Third World people, which aroused in the W. C. C. during this last decade such a violent opposition between « Third World » and « Western World. » The explosion came at the Central Committee Meeting at Utrecht, August 13-23, 1972.

3. *The Opposition between Third World and Western World.*

Several polarizations within the W. C. C. were going on already in the sixties. The most important one was the following: the polarization of those who, having discovered the urgent need for the Churches to face the social, racial, and political contests,

[40] *Populorum progressio*, n. 76-87, esp. n. 87.

were inclined to look for their ecumenism *only in the future,* despising the tradition-oriented and backward-looking classical ecumenism. They criticized the W. C. C. many times as being more a hindrance than a help for the world-wide, social engagement. We could call them the left to the extreme left wing. Opposed to them were others who — confident in union negotiations and bilateral conversations as necessary steps towards full communion of the Churches — were inclined to look *only backward* to Church traditions and old confessions of faith. They criticized the W.C.C. because they were afraid that the policy the W.C.C. has taken, as seen in its world-wide social engagement will lead to the loss of the fulness of truth, of tradition, yes even of the Gospel message itself. We could call them the right to the extreme right wing. These polarizations still exist in the seventies, but they have a different accent now by the sharpness of the radical opposition: « Third World » - « Western World. » At the Central Committee Meeting at Utrecht, Miss C. P. Karagdag of the Philippines, member of the Central Committee, reacted sharply in a discussion about the principal theme, « Committed to Fellowship, » with the negation of an existing concrete fellowship [41]. Her argumentation can be summed up in the following points: Christians have said with triumphalism that Christianity is universal, but in fact, Christianity until now never has been universal, never including the whole of humanity. Especially in race-discrimination Christianity has played a supporting role. Colonialism has been exercised in the name of Christianity. The Churches in the « Third World » are centres of Western capitalism. This is fully in opposition to the example of Jesus Christ, who identified himself with the oppressed and brought them the Joyful Message. If there is no repentance about the Christian part in the oppression, there will remain only confrontation between oppressors and oppressed, no fellowship. This well-formulated attack received applause and verbal support from different parts of the world, of course most of all from representatives of the « Third World »: from the famous Prof. Miguez-Bonino from Argentina (with some reservations, however), from several negroes, from Indians. Some went so far as to declare that they had to refuse taking part in Holy Supper together with (under this aspect) « unconverted Christians. »

[41] Cf. for the Central Committee Meeting at Utrecht and Miss Karagdad's argumentation: J. L. WITTE, S. J., « Riflessioni sul Comitato Centrale del Consiglio Mondiale delle Chiese a Utrecht », *La Civiltà Cattolica,* 124 (1973), 37-49.

The tension between the Third World and the Western one returned every time in this meeting, whenever a subject touching this Third World was treated. The international missionary Conference at Bangkok, 1973, treating the subject « Salvation Today, » was equally as turbulent as the Central Committee meeting in Utrecht. The only important change was that Bangkok manifested a general new awareness — the awareness that the centre of gravity of Christianity has shifted from the Western World to the Third World. Indeed a very important change. The fresh Christianity of Africa especially feels itself as the new bearer of the Gospel message. They are fully aware of the dechristianization of the Western world and they affirm with a justified pride that in the middle of 1972 40.6 % of the African population was Christian, and that Christianity is advancing rapidly in Africa (every year an advance of 5 to 6 %) [42]. Also in the far away Asian Bangkok, the Africans especially were stressing the universality of the mission of the Church (« mission in six continents », the slogan coined in Mexico City in 1963), together with the necessity to realize their own authentically African form of Christianity. There might be some juvenile exuberance in some African statements, but what a profoundly Christian insight in the sense of catholicity among these Protestants there was. Catholicity seen as the universal mission of the Church in all continents alike, realized in particular cultures, to produce in each the fruitful, authentic manifestation of Christ's message, received in a creative way in soul and body of just that people.

At Bangkok they spoke less about universal Church unity; this subject had already been discussed at length by the Central Committee of the W.C.C. in Utrecht. At Bangkok the accent

[42] We took these numbers from the article of J. W. WITVLIET, « Het nieuwe tijdperk en de oude koers, de wereldzendingsconferentie in Bangkok (29 Dec. 1972 - 13 Jan. 1973), » (« The New Period and the Old Course, The International Missionary Conference at Bangkok »), *Wending,* XXVIII (1973), 151-152. Witvliet cites Burgess Carr, secretary of the African Regional Council of Churches, speaking at the Bangkok meeting. He rightly takes the Christians of *all* Churches together.

was more on the local Church, on its missionary aspect (especially in the third section, « Churches Renewed in Mission ») and on « Salvation and Social Justice » (theme of the second section). Every time they started from personal experiences and situations and came, in reflection thereupon, sometimes to strong and rather aggressive statements. The second section stated: « Without the salvation of the churches from their captivity in the interests of dominating classes, races and nations, there can be no saving church. Without liberation of the churches and Christians from their complicity with structural injustice and violence, there can be no liberating church for mankind. Every church, all Christians, face the question whether they serve Christ and his saving work alone, or at the same time also the powers of inhumanity. 'No man can serve two masters, God and Mammon' (Matth. 6, 24). We must confess our misuse of the name of Christ by the accommodation of the churches to oppressive powers, by our self-interested apathy, lovelessness, and fear ... »[43]. It sounds like a confession of sins written for the Western Churches, and the remarkable thing is that the Western Churches accepted these accusations silently[44].

The last manifestation of the Third World — Western World conflict in the W.C.C. took place in the Central Committee Meeting at Berlin (11-18 August, 1974). At a certain moment in the discussion about the money to provide for the « Program-Combat Racism », the Lutheran Bishop Hans Otto Wölber accused the W. C. C. of acting unecumenically, because it identified itself with one theological tendency, the horizontalistic theology of bringing salvation — paradise — already here on this earth. The reaction of Dr. Potter, General Secretary of the W.C.C., was violent and also the president of the Central Committee, M. M. Thomas, showed himself deeply shocked by this frontal attack on the W.C.C.. — If the tension between the Third World

[43] Report of Section II of the Bangkok Conference, « Salvation and Social Justice, » *International Review of Mission*, LXII (1973), 200.

[44] The only rather strong protest came from the German Lutheran professor Peter Beyerhaus in his communication, « Growing Churches and Renewal, » *International Review of Mission*, LXII (1973), 226-230, and in an intervention in which he insisted on the discussion of his « Declaration of Frankfurt » (1970), against the tendency in the W.C.C. to reduce evangelization to a battle for political, racial and social justice. His proposal was rejected. Cf. WITVLIET, *art. cit.*, p. 154.

and the Christian West is not solved, the conflicts will accumulate until perhaps one day a new radical Church rupture will take place, crossing denominational lines. We seem now to be at the stage at which social opposition within the Churches takes over the divisive role formerly played by dogmatically opposed tendencies. We feel no vocation whatsoever to act as a prophet, but this seems to us to be in all soberness the conclusion of our short survey of what is going on in the W.C.C. — If one looks back now to the Bishops' Synod in Rome, one wonders how it is possible that several cardinals and bishops during and after the Synod expressed their surprise and astonishment that many African, Asian and South-American bishops pleaded strongly for indigenization of their dioceses. Is the ecumenical communication between the Churches ten years after Vatican II so bad that they had no idea of what was going on in this same decade in the W.C.C.? Happily enough they need not yet be preoccupied with this problem. The bishops from the Third World showed themselves so fully catholic that their stress on decentralization, indigenization and relative autonomy of their dioceses and regional bishops' conferences did in no way enter into conflict with their devoted submission to and unity with the Pope, principle of unity for the universal Church. But that does not mean, of course, that the inner dynamism of the young, expansive Christianity of Africa and the other parts of the Third World could be stopped by an eventual system of ignoring the real problems, desires, and urgencies of these local Churches.

4. *Local Church and Universal Church.*

Cardinal Joseph Malula, Archbishop of Kinshassa (Zaïre), said during the Synod: « In the past, foreign missionaries made Africa Christian. Now African Christians have to make Christianity African »[45]. That is a programme for the future that will be subscribed to by the great majority of the bishops of the Third World. It takes a theological stand on the problem of the relationship between the local and the universal Church,

[45] Cited in H. BRONKHORST, « Derde Wereld en Synode, » *De Tijd* (8 Nov., 1974), p. 29. The same text is given in mitigated form in *L'Osservatore Romano* (4 Oct., 1974), p. 5. During the Synod several African bishops spoke along the same lines.

because it asks from the universal Church the approbation of the Africanization in the African local Churches. This « Africanization » is still an insufficiently determined notion. But, if we understood Cardinal Malula and the other African bishops well (we have at the moment at our disposal only the summaries of their speeches given in the *Osservatore Romano* and the texts of some interviews), they are not asking for a radical « adaptation » of the Gospel to African morals and customs. They ask only for a full integration, or an « enfleshment » of Christianity in African culture. Is that fundamentally anything more than the demand of fresh and vital local Churches, not to be hindered in developing themselves according to the inner dynamism of truly catholic Churches. Can the universal Church permit this? That is the question.

We found a fairly complete description of what such inner dynamism of truly catholic Churches stands for, in the « Statements and Recommendations of the First Plenary Assembly of Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences. » The Assembly writes: « To preach the Gospel in Asia today, we must make the message and life of Christ truly incarnate in the minds and lives of our peoples. The primary focus of our task of evangelization, then, at this time in our history, is the building up of a truly local Church. For the local Church is the realization and the enfleshment of the Body of Christ in a given people, a given place and time. It is not a community in isolation from other communities of the Church one and catholic. Rather it seeks communion with all of them. With them it professes the one faith, shares the one Spirit and the one sacramental life. In a special way it rejoices in its communion and filial oneness with the See of Peter, which presides over the universal Church in love. ».[46]

From the description here given, it is very clear that this central problem for missionary activity today is fundamentally an ecumenical problem: the question is how the unity of the universal Church can be conserved and even intensified, while

[46] « Statements and Recommendations of the First Plenary Assembly of Federation of Asian Bishop's Conferences, » *L'Osservatore Romano* (June 20, 1974) (English edition). The group of Asian bishops had studied the themes to be treated at the Synod together, just as did the African group.

the local Churches through forthgoing indigenization more and more differentiate. We ask ourselves: *Have the bishops of Africa and Asia rightly evaluated the position and function of the local Church in its relation to the universal Church?* We will have to go back deep into history to formulate a satisfying answer.

In the first centuries the local Church had a central position in the building up of the Church of Christ. Primitive Christianity was aware of the fact that this « building up » happened in the local Church under the guidance of the bishop. The local Church indicated the communion of a group of faithful, who living in the same village or city, celebrated the Holy Eucharist together under the guidance of their bishop. Somewhat later the « local Church » could also extend itself to an ecclesiastical province. It was a rather elastic concept; but always the « local Church » or « particular Church » has the connotation of a unity, « identical in opposition » with the universal Church [47]. This means that, if we take the Church realistically, a certain tension between « local Church » and « universal Church » can easily arise, though the ideal situation perhaps is a perfect harmony. So it is not to be wondered at that there arose in the course of centuries two ecclesiologies: the oriental ecclesiology with the local Church as central and primordial point, which need not exclude the affirmation of the universal Church and the acceptance of its universal head, the successor of St. Peter; on the other hand, the western ecclesiology with the universal Church and its head, the Pope as central and primordial reality, which need not exclude the affirmation of the local Churches, as Church in the full sense under its head, their bishop. Especially because of historical circumstances, polarizations have driven the two ecclesiologies to strict opposition and led to separation. Thus the Decree on Ecumenism says: « For many centuries, the Churches of the East and of the West *went their own ways,* though a brotherly communion

[47] In the Synod of Bishops, 1974, there were two opposite opinions about the usefulness of a strict distinction between « local Church » and « particular Church. » We agree with the opinion of Fr. Lecuyer, speaking as relator of the French group B, that it seems better not to limit the term « particular Church » to *one* diocese; cf. *L'Osservatore Romano* (18 Oct., 1974), p. 7.

of faith and sacramental life bound them together. If disagreements in belief and discipline arose among them, the Roman See acted by common consent as moderator »[48]. That was a picture of the situation in the first centuries. The separation came with its terrible consequences. Vatican II seems to see in the original « orientalization » of the local Churches the possibility of a menace for the unity of the universal Church. Orientalization helped — once « external causes and mutual failures in understanding and charity came up» — « for setting the stage for separations »[49]. And yet, the same Council declared two paragraphs further on: « From the earliest times ... the Eastern Churches followed their own disciplines ... Far from being an obstacle to the Church's unity, such diversity of customs and observances only adds to her comeliness, and contributes greatly to carrying out her mission .... To remove any shadow of doubt, then, this sacred Synod solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, while keeping in mind the necessary unity of the whole Church, have the power, [« facultatem » the Latin text says], to govern themselves according to their own disciplines, *since these are better suited to the temperament of their faithful* and better adapted to foster the good of souls. » And « although it has not always been honored, » this is then called a « traditional principle »[50].

So we see that there is, according to Vatican II, a double-sidedness in « orientalization. » On the one hand it may create, in certain circumstances, a danger for the unity of the universal Church. On the other hand, « it adds to her comeliness, » and, much more important, « it contributes greatly to carrying out her mission. » So we can summarize the Council attitude in these words: « Orientalization » of the Eastern local Churches should be exercised sincerely and thoroughly, but one should always keep in mind the safeguarding of the necessary unity of the universal Church. This summary might be useful when we consider the attitude of African and Asian bishops with regard to the problem of local Church — universal Church.

A theology of the local Church was part of the patristic

[48] Decree on Ecumenism, n. 14 (italics ours). — Cf. also: Lumen Gentium, n. 13.

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] *Ibid.*, n. 16 (italics ours).

tradition and that of the early Middle Ages (cf. note 52). Later on it disappeared completely, at least in the Western Church. The Eastern Orthodox theology continued to defend the view that the whole Church is realized in the local Church, though all the local Churches have a tendency towards the totality (καθ' ὅλον). We cannot go into the history of the disappearance of this theology in the Western Church and into the reasons why the theology of the local Church had to wait until Vatican II before it got its place back in Western theology[51].

In any case, though after some struggle, Vatican II introduced a theology of the local Church in several parts of the Council documents. The most developed exposition about « new local Churches » is found in the Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes*), ch. III. The particular Churches are seen here as Churches in the full sense, « communities of faith, liturgy and love, » with a « laity striving to set up a public order based on love and justice » (n. 19). The Council insists here on an embodiment of Christianity in the culture of the people. The last paragraph (n. 22) occupies itself directly with the problem of indigenization. It states: « From the customs and traditions of their people, from their wisdom and their learning, from their arts and sciences, these Churches borrow all those things which can contribute to the glory of their Creator, the revelation of the Savior's grace, or the proper arrangement of Christian life. If this goal is to be achieved, theological investigation must necessarily be stirred up in each major sociocultural area, as it is called .... As a result, avenues will be opened for a more profound adaptation in the whole area of Christian life. Thanks to such a procedure, every appearance of syncretism and of false particularism can be excluded, and Christian life can be accomodated to the genius and the dispositions of each culture. Particular traditions, together with the individual patrimony of each family of nations, can be illuminated by the light of the gospel and then be taken up into Catholic unity. » If the indigenous clergy, or the missionaries coming from outside the country, follow up these indications

[51] Decree on the Bishop's Pastoral Office in the Church, n. 11, gives a descriptive definition of a diocese as « a particular Church, in which the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative. »

seriously, can there be any doubt that the result will be a theology which — though faithful to the Revelation — will be very different from our Western theology of today?

For the purposes of our article chapter III of the Decree on Ecumenism is still more interesting. We see this chapter as the « Magna Charta » of the indigenization of the local Churches. Here we see in the example of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, in their separateness and in their way to full communion, how the R. C. Church today values the local Churches. There are, of course, similarities and dissimilarities between Orthodox Churches and local Churches of the Third World. Let us start with the similarities. The qualification « sister-Churches, » applied in n. 17 of the Decree on Ecumenism to the Eastern Orthodox Churches can be applied also to the local Churches of the Third World in their relationship to the local Churches of the Western World. The qualification « sister-Churches » has a deep foundation, both historically and dogmatically. There is between « sister-Churches » an intimate bond of « koinonia » through the common participation in the eucharistic Body and Blood of Christ. That creates a vital consanguinity in the Blood of Christ. Thus the relationship between « *sister*-Churches » is founded in the Holy Eucharist. It was in this sense that the term was used by Church Fathers and in the early Middle Ages [52]. « Sister-Churches » in the beginning did not presuppose separation, but expressed the common joy in the eucharistic « koinonia » with the risen Lord.

When afterwards canonical separation between two « sister-Churches » occurred, this separation could not destroy the vital, sacramental link between these Churches, as long as they remained faithful to the eucharistic communion with Christ and to its essential conditions, especially with regard to ministry. — The question may be put in this context: How could one suppose, or even suggest, that the one Church of Jesus Christ does not « subsist » *in any way* in such a separated « sister-Church », but *exclusively* in the R. C. Church? — We are glad that the

[52] Cf. the very interesting discussion about the greek and roman « sister-Churches, » between Anselmus, Bishop of Haverberg, and Nechites, Archbishop of Nicomedia, held in the year 1145 (Lib. III « De diverso Eucharistiae ritu Graecorum et Latinorum »), *P L.* 1217 D; 1219 B - 1220 A. — Hearty thanks to Fr. Congar who drew my attention to this discussion.

Vatican Council reintroduced the term « sister-Churches » into theological language and we see in the first place, in the application of the term to the Eastern Orthodox Churches, a basis for the comparison between these local Churches and the Churches of the Third World. There are other points of similarity. Both groups of local Churches try to express, « in faithfulness to the doctrine of the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the liturgical prayers » (Acts 2, 42), what has been handed over by the Apostles, as essential for the one Church of Christ (we speak here only about the intention). Both groups are realizing the development of Christian tradition and the necessity of an « incarnation » in soul and body of their local Christian communities or Churches. Both groups are dissatisfied with an imposed Western pattern of religious life. Is the Decree on Ecumenism not proposing some general principles about indigenization where it describes history, liturgical and spiritual tradition, discipline and the proper character of Eastern theology, indicating also some principal conditions « in order to restore communion and unity or *preserve them* »? [53] Why should African and Asian bishops, who are in communion with the Pope, « a priori » be refused what has been developed so generously in n. 14-18 of the Decree on Ecumenism in relation to the separated Orthodox Churches? Even in relation to « differences in theological expressions of doctrine, » Vatican II was extremely mild, admitting that « sometimes one tradition has come nearer than the other to an apt appreciation of certain aspects of a revealed mystery, or has expressed them in a clearer manner. As a result, these various theological formulations are often to be considered as complementary rather than conflicting » [54]. And when in the same paragraph the Council comes to speak of those former Eastern Orthodox, « who are preserving this heritage » and « are already living in full communion with their brethren who follow the tradition of the West, » it uses this strong formulation, expressing the high esteem for the different tradition: « This sacred Synod declares that this entire heritage of spirituality and liturgy, of discipline and theology, in their various tradi-

[53] Decree on Ecumenism, n. 18 (italics ours).
[54] *Ibid.*, n. 17.

tions, belongs to the full catholic and apostolic character of the Church » [55].

Is the possibility that an eventual African or Asian theology would belong to the full catholic and apostolic character of the Church, denied by Pope Paul VI in his concluding address to the Vatican Synod? We do not think so. It is true that the Pope after a declaration about the necessity of a certain adaptation to nation and culture in the work of evangelization added: « It would, nevertheless, be dangerous to speak of diversified theologies, according to continents and cultures. The content of faith is either catholic, or it is not » [56]. The passage has clearly the character of a serious warning against an imprudent and radical adaptation, though the necessity of adaptation is admitted. The possibility of an African or Asian theology is not explicitly denied. But the emphasis is given to the warning for dangers. This seems to us to be fully understandable. There is indeed not only similarity, but also a profound dissimilarity between the Eastern Orthodox and the African and Asian local Churches. The most important dissimilarity — in relation to our problem — seems to us to be the following: most of the local Churches in the Third World do not have a long Christian tradition. They have not developed for centuries in a Christian milieu, in which Christianity could become rooted deeper and deeper in the indigenous culture. When separation came between the Eastern Orthodox and Western Churches, both already possessed their more or less well developed liturgical forms and devotions, adapted to the profoundly Christianized people. This is not the case in most of the local Churches in the Third World. Generally speaking, they cannot build upon well developed indigenous liturgy and Christian customs. They have to create them. That means that in the hot climate of strong, or even extreme nationalism, with the tendency to return to the deeper lying roots of their own people, they are tempted to fall back on elements of former, indigenous religions. Dr. G. J. C. van der Horst, writing about the danger of syncretism of Christianity and Bantu religion, points to the following elements: the African idea of God is confused with the biblical concept of God; Christ, the Reconciliator, is seen as accomplishing the

[55] *Ibid*

[56] Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition) (Nov. 7, 1974), p. 9.

task of African mediators and prophets; magical union with forefathers is easily identified with communion of saints; the African concept of life after death is identified with hell and eternal life. Thus the unique character of biblical faith would be lost [57]. We cannot judge how far Dr. van der Horst is right, but we give his opinion as a confirmation from the Protestant side about the danger of syncretism in the African world.

Next to this danger of syncretism, one could still point to the tendency, especially among the so-called « black theology people » in North America, towards a sectarian exclusivism, which could become really dangerous for the unity of the universal Church [58]. The fact of an intense activity does not in itself make the local Church fully fruitful for the whole Church of Christ. An intensive activity of an introverted local Church is driving towards an exclusive attitude in relation to all other Christians and local Churches and becomes therefore dangerous for the necessary unity of the universal Church; thus, it will act objectively against the outspoken will of Christ « that all may be one ».

All of this is true and may explain the papal preoccupation. But what was so remarkable in the speeches of several African bishops and still more so in the Declaration of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences we cited above, is the fact that they stressed so much the collegiality and communion with all the other bishops and the episcopal conferences, and especially with the Pope. The Asian declaration had the following to say about their own local Church: « In a special way it rejoices in its communion and filial oneness with the See of Peter, which presides over the universal Church in love. » Could those Bishops not be given some encouragement in their rightly undertaken, necessary task, « to build up a truly local Church, as the realization and the enfleshment of the Body of Christ in a given people, a given place and time »? [59]

[57] Cf. Dr. G. J. C. VAN DER HORST, « Afrikaanse theologie en maatschappijcritiek, » *Wending, 's Gravenhage* (Holland), XXIX (1974), 108 ff. (« African Theology and Critique of Society »).

[58] Cf. J. J. CAREY, « What Can We Learn from Black Theology?, » *Theological Studies*, XXXV (1974), 518-528.

[59] « Statements and Recommendations of the First Plenary Ass. of Fed. of Asian Bishop's Confer., » *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition) (June 20, 1974), p. 9.

The bishops of Asia, Africa and South-America have taken up the old doctrine of the first centuries about the local Church and applied it to their own local Churches. In doing so they have remained faithful to the new interpretation which Vatican II gave of the theology of the local Church. Our citations from various Council documents proves this sufficiently, we think. There remains the fact that Africanization and Asianization have a similar double-sidedness, as we have already observed in orientalization: *It has to be done, but it is not without danger!*

The African, Asian and South-American bishops will have understood the justified preoccupation of the Pope, expressed in his concluding address. There was indeed at the end of the Synod no sign whatsoever of a cleavage between Pope and bishops, not even in personal contact with outsiders after the close of the Synod (at least so far as has been publicized). On the contrary, there was an immense goodwill towards Pope and universal Church shown by African, Asian and South-American bishops alike, even after the concluding address. May that goodwill convince the Pope and his councillors that the rhythmical movement between ecumenical, Christ-centered unity in the Pope, and expansive, all-permeating catholicity, is still sound in the Catholic Church.

To take together at the end all the points we considered:

In the face of the bewildering problems of this very realistic worldwideness of our days, the Church of Christ has to be open to the world and to the future, but always in faithfulness to the saving design of God, revealed in human history. This design of God shows the following characteristic lines: The Word of God entered into our human history, when the Son of God became man, the Man Jesus Christ. The Word of God became concrete also, in an analogical way, when the Church of Christ was historically founded. The Word of God was addressed to the People of God, built up by Him through baptism, in the faith received. The Covenant of God with his People was so constituted by Him, proleptically in the Old Testament, as preparation for the New Covenant in Jesus Christ, realized by Cross and Resurrection, completed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church. But in that Church the Word of God was addressed to the whole of humanity, and the Covenant had therefore to be extended to all mankind. In the « gathering into one the children of God who are scattered abroad » (John 11, 52), the Holy Spirit unites them very concretely into one human Person, Jesus Christ, the risen Lord.

But the gathering is historically realized in different phases.

It is the Holy Spirit who brings about the historical realization of the one universal Church of Jesus Christ in the R. C. Church by the gift of the created fulness of grace and truth in Christ, faithfully accepted and conserved through the centuries. It is the same Holy Spirit who brings about the historical realization of the one, universal Church of Jesus Christ in the other Churches and ecclesial Communities by the many gifts of grace and truth, faithfully accepted there, notwithstanding the limitations of the fulness, imposed on his working (at least) by essential, institutional imperfections. Both in the R. C. Church and in the separated Churches there is realized proleptically the last fulfillment of Christ's promises, though in the R. C. Church according to the fulness, in the others according to their degree of participation. And it is this proleptic fulfilment which is the Godgiven sign of the ultimate sense of personal existence and of the existence of the universal human history, which every man ultimately is searching for.

The same Holy Spirit, — Spirit of Christ —, is working, unifying the whole of humanity, where the Light of Christ, the Logos, shines in the darkness, so that this life was the light of men (cf. John 1, 4-5). Thus God's strategy of salvation becomes somewhat transparent: The Church, sign of unity of all men in Christ, has to be founded and to be conserved in all its purity, and this one Church has to proclaim its Gospel-message to the whole of humanity, prepared by the light of the Logos to accept and realize concretely the light and life of Christ which answers to its deepest thirst for the sense of existence. Within this one Church *ecumenicity* is the gift of Christ to conserve, or to heal, the given unity in the plurality of Church-traditions, springing from so many different social, cultural and historical circumstances.

Catholicity is within this Church the gift of Christ by which it strives to reach out to all peoples in all times, to which the Word of God is addressed mediately (i. e. by means of the Church). Catholicity, as dynamic power of the Church, drives

evangelization to the right accommodation of the Gospel-message, so that it penetrates every culture with its proper fulness of grace and truth, reflecting the fulness of Christ. The « proper » fulness is not « per se » a western-coloured fulness. It is the consequence of a true incarnation of the Gospel-message in the minds and lives of the different peoples, result of the building up of a truly local Church, — truly local by its deep roots in religious feeling and culture of its own people; truly then the Church of Christ by its full participation in unity and local realization of essence and task of the universal Church. So ecumenicity and catholicity are intrinsecally connected, not only in their supernatural reality (as correlated aspects of the fulness of Christ), but also in their earthly realizations in the different Churches. The right balance of ecumenicity and catholicity has, in principle, been given to the R. C. Church. That is her great strength in the ecumenical movement and in the dialogue with the world. Though she may be tempted to retreat behind her apparently safe boundaries (but isn't it only « apparently »?), she has to have the courage to face actual challenges, simply because she has to be faithful to her vocation as the unique, though not exclusive, Church of Christ for the salvation of the whole world.

Evangelization and inter-religious dialogue

M. DHAVAMONY, S. J.

INTRODUCTION

The gift of God in Christ, the Gospel message, is meant for all men, and the Church is sent to the entire world to communicate this message. The need for the Church to communicate with all men in the world calls for dialogue, for it is through dialogue that one can establish a genuine exchange between the Church and the world [1]. As the Word of God is best understood when it is spoken in relation to the word of man for whom it was meant, the Church has the responsibility to listen to the men of the world as they speak from their life and experience, rooted in their socio-cultural and religious traditions. The effectiveness of the communication of the Gospel message depends in part on the Church's awareness and response to their religious meanings and questions.

The inadequacy of monologue for communication is born out by experience. The effectiveness of communication must certainly be judged at least in part by the hearer's response in his own terms. It is useless to complain about the theological and religious illiteracy of the people themselves; for any method of communication has to take into account the meanings that people bring and see to it that they understand the message properly in the light of their ability to communicate in their own words. Monological communication is doomed to failure as it is not responsive to the patterns of experience and understanding that people are accustomed to when they are to receive

[1] Reuel L. Howe's book *The Miracle of Dialogue* contains profound insights on dialogue. This book gives excellent indications on how to achieve true dialogue in families, the Church, and even the international arena. The chief concern of the book is expressed in his statement that it is imperative that a Christian be a dialogical person through whom the Word that gives life is spoken.

the message. In the monological communication the speaker is so preoccupied with himself that he loses touch with his listeners and becomes blind to the needs of them and to their search for meaning.

Besides, monologue arises from the false assumption that we know all and that we have only to declare it to others in order to tell people what we think they ought to know. Further, monologue implies a closed mind and supposes that our way of thinking and experiencing is the only way and the best way, and thus prevents any in-take from others. On the contrary the dialogical word is an open word, a word of expectation inviting response. In speaking the word of dialogue a person puts himself at the service of others and becomes the servant of God. It is a word in relation, giving meaning and eliciting meaning, conveying understanding and receiving understanding, removing all barriers of meaning and understanding in the meeting of minds, in the meeting of life-situations. It is an interpersonal word, deriving its power not merely from what is spoken but from what is born out in life, life corresponding to truth, and truth drawing its power from life. As the dialogical partner becomes the servant of truth, he becomes the servant of God; as he experiences God's communion with the other, he is constrained to communion with others. The meeting of man with man involves an implicit meeting with God. As M. Buber puts it, « In each Thou we address the eternal Thou » [2].

The dialogical approach in preaching as well as in all other activities of the Church has been explained time and again in the documents of the Vatican II and more fully elaborated by Pope Paul VI in his Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* [3]. The post-

[2] *I and Thou*, New York, 1958, p. 63.

[3] Vatican II speaks of the ecumenical dialogue, i.e., dialogue which is established between the 'Christians of different Churches or Communions' (*Unitatis redintegratio*, n. 4; of the inter-religious dialogue (*Nostra Aetate*); of dialogue with non-believers (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 21); of dialogue in the missions (*Ad Gentes*, n. 11, n. 15). It is obvious that the principles on which each type of dialogue rests and the themes which it deals with are partly different from those which characterize other types of dialogue. However the various forms of dialogue cannot be dissociated one from the other. As the Council says, « We for our part should not wish to exclude anybody from such a dialogue, prompted only by charity and directed towards truth ... » (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 92). The Council has realized that modern man seeks for dialogue as a privi-

conciliar Church has reflected much on the issue of inter-religious dialogue which raises many important questions [4]. What is happening on the religious frontier today which invites a religious dialogue? What in fact have men of other faiths to offer? Is it in any way different from what Christians in the past have conceived it to be? If the essence of the Church is to proclaim the Gospel message, and not to promote a certain form of spiritual experience which would be added on to those the world already knows, what is the exact role of the inter-religious dialogue in such a perspective? [5] On what ground, theological or otherwise, should the Church express a greater appreciation of other faiths? These questions engage the Christian thinkers in a responsible manner and it is in this context that the problem of relationship between religious dialogue and evangelization arises. The Christian engagement on the religious frontier is threefold: the prospect of co-operation with men of other faiths to promote justice and peace in the world; the engagement in communication or witness to the Gospel message; and the engagement in religious dialogue. The last two engagements and their mutual relationship are the main points of this essay.

leged means of establishing and developing mutual understanding, esteem, respect and love, whether between groups or between individuals; for this reason he is prone to profit by it more and more at all levels of his life, political, social, economic, educational and religious. Part III of *Ecclesiam Suam* of Pope Paul VI deals elaborately with dialogue, outlining the theological and religious principles of dialogue: The Church's dialogue modelled on the dialogue of salvation; What kind of dialogue?; Dangers to be avoided; spiritual favour.

[4] See the publications of the three Secretariates for Christian Unity, for dialogue with non-Christians, with non-believers. *Evangelization, Dialogue and Development*, Papers of the International Theological Conference, Nagpur, 1971, edited by Mariasusai Dhavamony, 'Documenta Missionalia', No. 5, Rome, 1972; *The Light and Life We Seek to Share*, All India *Consultation on Evangelization*, Patna, 1973; K. Klostermaier, *Hindu and Christian in Vrindaban*, London, 1969.

[5] See W. A. Visser't Hooft, *L'Eglise face au syncrétisme*, Genève, 1964, p. 156.

1) The meaning of inter-religious dialogue

Inter-religious dialogue is a coming together of two persons or groups, of different religions, as religiously committed persons, with the view of enriching, deepening and broadening their own religious life through mutual understanding of one another's convictions and witness. Dialogue involves a serious and genuine address and response between two persons or more, in the process of which the being and truth of each is encountered by the being and truth of the other [6]. The two partners of dialogue try to enter into significant relationship with each other; i.e., to communicate between themselves. In any process of communication there is a flow of meaning between two parties in spite of all the obstacles which may prevent such a relationship. Dialogue is an attempt to communicate, to explain, to enlighten, to understand [7].

Dialogue is an intensely personal activity and is the means of achieving personal existence for human beings. As Martin Buber puts it:

> « The life of human beings is not passed in the sphere of transitive verbs alone. It does not exist in virtue of activities alone which have some *thing* for their object. ... But the realm of *Thou* has a different basis. When *Thou* is spoken, the speaker has no thing for his object. For where there is a thing there is another thing. Every *It* is bounded by others; *It* exists only through being bounded by others. But when *Thou* is spoken, there is no thing. *Thou* has no bounds. When *Thou* is spoken, the speaker has no *thing;* he has indeed nothing. But he takes his stand in relation. » [8]

[6] Dialogue is a meeting of the being and truth of one with that of the other because dialogue is a positive effort to attain a deeper understanding of the truth *through mutual awareness of one another's convictions and witnessing.*

[7] See J. Aagaard, *Witness and Dialogue in Missionary Perspective*, in *Oecumenica*, An Annual Symposium of Ecumenical Research, Minneapolis, 1969, edited by F. W. Kantzenbach and V. Vajta, pp. 133 ff.

[8] *I and Thou*, op. cit., p. 4. *Relation* is a key word in Buber's terminology; it is not an epistemological generality but bears a characteristic and specific sense. Relation is properly applicable in the case of the second primary word only, *I-Thou; I-It* is the relation of subject-object in the realm of knowledge, and not properly relation in the full sense.

The personal relationship that is established between two human beings is further explained by him as follows:

> « The *I* of the primary word *I-Thou* is a different *I* from that of the primary word *I-It*. The *I* of the primary word *I-It* makes its appearance as individuality and becomes conscious of itself as subject (of experiencing and using). The *I* of the primary word *I-Thou* makes its appearance as person and becomes conscious of itself as subjectivity (without a dependent genitive). Individuailty makes its appearance by being differentiated from other individualities. A person makes his appearance by entering into relation with other persons. The one is a spiritual form of natural detachment, the other the spiritual form of natural solidarity of connexion. » [9]

The action of dialogue is one in which a person not only makes himself available to others but also becomes conscious of others as persons. Hence, dialogue implies complete openness and trust in order that a real meeting of meaning and understanding can take place between the two partners. In such a relationship the participants experience the other as other and both communicate and learn. Each dialogic partner speaks out his convictions to the other who has different convictions of his own with genuine interest in them [10].

The partners make a sincere effort to listen and learn; to seek for meaning and to try to understand the truth and life of the other in openness and mutual trust. This process of communication in dialogue is not easy, for there can be mental and psychological barriers which hinder communication. We shall outline a very common pattern of misunderstanding which may arise not merely from lack of clarity in expressing oneself but also from one's misevaluation of what is taking place when two people are talking together [11]. Misevaluation of the process of communication consists of certain assumptions that create barriers to communication such as these: that what is taking place is something essentially logical; that words in themselves apart from the people involved mean something; that the pur-

[9] Ibid. p. 62.

[10] See J. G. Davies, *Dialogue with the World*, London, 1967, pp. 28-29.

[11] See F. J. Roethlisberger, *Barriers to Communication Between Men*, in *The use and Misuse of Language*, ed. S. I. Hayakawa, Greenwich, 1962, pp. 41-46.

pose of the interaction is to get someone to see things from one's own point of view. These assumptions create a chain reaction of perceptions and negative feelings which block communication. On the contrary the factors that facilitate communication are the following assumptions: that what is taking place in a dialogue is an interaction of reason and sentiment; that the person more than his words means something; that the object of the interaction is to give the other person an opportunity to express freely his differences. Because of these factors a chain reaction of perceptions and feelings in favour of communication is engendered and a reciprocal relationship is established. In the first case a person's individual uniqueness is being denied; his integrity put in peril, he becomes defensive and even belligerent. In the second case the person feels himself understood and accepted as a person; hence he expresses his own views freely and sees the partner as a source of help. Thus it becomes evident that the partner's capacity and willingness to see and accept points of view different from his own in a face-to-face relationship are essential to personal communication. The biggest block to personal communication is man's inability to listen intelligently, understandingly, and skillfully to another person.

Having explained the obstacles to communication, now we shall distinguish the different types of communication [12]. (a) When we say something and something happens as the result of our speaking, then our communication is instrumental in causing this event to happen. For example, « Shut the door », and the door is then shut. Some statements are instrumental in intent or effect, without being phrased as such. For example, « The food needs salt ». That is, one may request salt directly or one may comment that the food needs salt and thus indirectly be instrumental. We can call this *instrumental communication.* (b) We can also communicate merely to inform someone about something; it is the case of the most neutral exchanges of information, of messages without intent to be instrumental. For example, « The next train leaves at 10 P.M. ». We can call this type *informative or transmitting communication.* (c) The

[12] See John C. Condon, *Semantics and Communication,* New York, 1966, pp. 87-107.

non-affective language of fact and description or the language of clear and explicit requests is not sufficient in interpersonal communications. Delicate feelings, desires, wishes are expressed or hinted at with the attitude of the whole person who is speaking. We can call this affective communication, for it is based on love or emotional feelings of the speaker towards the other person. It is also a convincing communication, for a person may not do what he is asked to do directly; he could see reasons that he might not be able to accept. What is implied in affective language is that affective communications in a variety of situations ' move ' the listener in a way that a direct request would not. (d) Finally, in communication there are certain relations which pass between persons, which are more than words. These are cues, hints, suggestions, that indicate how the spoken words are to be understood or interpreted. These communications about communication can be called metacommunication cues. Vocal inflections, gestures, circumstances provide cues for interpreting the message correctly; these cues may reinforce or alter or nuance the meaning of the words used; sometimes they even may contradict what the words seem to mean. Another function of this metacommunication is that of feedback; namely, the speaker is able to detect the reactions of the listener which are nonverbal.

Dialogue as communication is not just an exchange of informative facts or certain ideas but is concerned with man's fundamental convictions about life and death and about his place in the universe. Religious dialogue as communication is concerned with a common witness to God, with our relationship of dependence on and love to him. Each partner in this dialogue desires to communicate to the other what is specific and personal in his own religious experience and desires to hear from the other his authentic religious experience with great respect and sympathy. Not that ideas are unimportant, but they are not decisive.

Inter-religious dialogue is of the nature of affective communication. We can say that love is to dialogue what blood is to the body. The body dies when there is no flow of blood; so also when love stops, dialogue ends [13]. When dialogue

[13] See Reuel L. Howe, *The Miracle of Dialogue,* op. cit., pp. 3 f. On

ends, if not hate and resentment, certainly, isolation and exclusivity will result. In fact, it is the relationship of love, involved in the dialogue that brings together people of two different religious convictions in a meaningful personal relation. The basis of communication is a shared feeling. And failure of communication is ultimately due to lack of common feeling or experience to share. Once people begin to love one another, they will want to explore each other's minds and share their experience. It is through love that one gains a deeper knowledge of another person and enables him to penetrate more deeply into the secrets of the other person. Authentic religious truths are manifested in persons and not in abstract propositions and it is through eyes of love and empathy that one discovers that the dialogic partner does not merely communicate his religious message but he *is* his message. As A. D. Lindsay remarks, « The question as to the nature of justice was one which it was natural for Socrates to ask, and impossible for him to answer ... And so Plato has given the Republic this curious form, because he believed that Socrates in his person and his life offered the real answer to the questions he propounded, and which his teaching never solved »[14]. In other words, if dialogue is determined by affective communication, it addresses itself to the very being of man and as such it is bound to result in insights that might be missed otherwise.

This personal relationship expressed in love between the partners is essential to dialogue and hence we have to say that interfaith dialogue involves religious persons rather than religious systems. Systems of belief provide subject matter for discussion and conversation but it is living faith that makes an encounter. In brief, it is in the experience of love between the two religious partners that serious attempts can be made to empathyse and get inside another religion[15]. Terms like religion,

personalism in dialogue, see M. Buber's *Dialogisches Leben*, Zürich, 1947, and *Das dialogische Prinzip*, Heidelberg, 1965; in these two studies he presents his most important and recent ideas on dialogue.

[14] See his introduction to his translation *The Republic*, London, 1950, pp. XV, XVI.

[15] See Robert D. Young, *Encounter with World Religious*, Philadelphia, 1970, pp. 169 ff.

Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Primitive Religions, etc., should be understood concretely in the sense of historical-cumulative tradition and the personal faith of men and women who follow these religions. Attempts to describe religious experience in terms of an impersonal identity called religion miss the personal element of faith[16]. As religious phenomena imply experience and expression, one must be sensitive to the particular character of the individual's involvement as he expresses himself in prayer, ritual, or social responsibility. This does not mean that we have to ignore the religious systems. We have to note that it is not certain that even intelligent and well-instructed believers are fully acquainted with their own faith or understand it sufficiently. However imperfect the ideas of religious systems, we need them as valuable tools at hand.

Intimately connected with the personal aspect of dialogue is the respect for the partner as he is and as he believes. If the partner is by dialogue merely directed and used, he would be treated as things or objects and not as persons. Partners are to be respected and valued for what they are in themselves. When we really try to know the other partners for what they are, and to speak to them with respect and in all sincerity and honesty, then we are honouring them and inviting them to respond in a way that becomes a person; then only can we meet as persons in our communication. Any relationship, communication, even love that are not dialogical, will exploit and seek to appropriate, and will become consequently destructive.

It is also important to distinguish between dialogic principle and dialogic method[17]. The dialogic principle or the principle of dialogue consists in one's openness to the other partner and willingness not only to speak but also to hear and to be changed by what one hears, if necessary. The dialogic method is the servant of the principle and can take many different forms: individual encounters, discussion in a study centre, lecture in the form of dialogue; in brief, any method by which one partner is attentive to, and activates the meanings of, the other in relation to what he is saying. But at times the group process

[16] See W. C. Smith, *The Faith of Other Men*, New York, 1962; *The Meaning and End of Religion*, New York, 1964.

[17] Reuel L. Howe, *The Miracle of Dialogue*, op. cit., pp. 40 ff.

could take place in the form of manipulating people cleverly into a predetermined point of view; though such a process might look like a dialogue, when actually it is only a form of brain-washing [18].

2) The Christian partner in Dialogue

Having outlined the nature and basis of dialogue between people of different religious traditions, still we have to clarify some of the problems that arise from the fact that one of the partners in dialogue is the Christian. Lack of understanding has created many confusions with regard to the experience of inter-religious dialogue.

The first question is whether the Christian partner should in dialogue speak of his belief that Jesus Christ is in a unique and transcendent manner The Way, The Truth, and The Life. From the side of the Christian, dialogue supposes the standpoint of the believer accepting Jesus Christ in faith as God's final and full revelation. This is what it means to be a Christian and every Christian has to engage in dialogue as a believing Christian. As a matter of fact, this is what a non-Christian partner expects of him in the inter-religious dialogue, in as much as he himself should present himself as a convinced and believing person in his own faith.

Some fear that the dialogical attitude might neutralize the problem of truth, and accepting the other partner with his different religious traditions would mean renouncing faith in one's own truth. This fear is based on the supposition that dialogue would lead to a kind of syncretism in religious truth and a false tolerance. Where many things are tolerated, many things can be true, and where anything can be true, practically nothing is true. This fear is not justified. Dialogue does not mean that the partners start with doubt or with putting in doubt their own convictions which contain truth, and submit to dialogue by a kind of ' pandialogism '. Nothing could be opposed to true dialogue than this attitude of scepticism or religious relativism. Search after truth in the real sense of

[18] Robert D. Young, *Encounter with World Religions*, op. cit., p. 172.

dialogue is out of question on this premise [19]. The dialogue partners do not start with complete evacuation of what they possess as truth. For in a genuine and real dialogue different convictions are involved in a meeting marked by the quest after truth, and witness to the one truth by searching for it on the part of both the partners. It is needless to say that the Christian partner must not change his faith; he is the depository of the gift of faith; he knows the one truth, and his searching must not harm his faith, far less to eliminate the certainty of faith which lies at the basis of his Christian experience [20].

In fact, commitment to truth does help the discovery of the ingredients of truth in the various convictions and the same truth can be recognized from many viewpoints. In dialogue the partners address each other, fully convinced of each other's position, each representing his own perspective of truth. To engage in dialogue means to submit oneself to a renewed search for truth. The spirit of dialogue excludes the opposite poles of fanaticism and scepticism [21]. It signifies a truth ' together with ', not a truth ' against '. The method of dialogue makes it clear that truth is indivisible, but at the same time yet incomplete. As Y. Congar observes, « Dialogue is one of the means by which the diversity of their (i.e., of human beings) perceptions resolve themselves again into a coherent unity towards which everything converges and grows » [22].

Second, if Christians have to carry on dialogue with the full faith in Jesus Christ, the unique Saviour of mankind and Revealer of God's Truth to man, why should they be a listening Church? If they possess full divine Truth, what need there is for dialogue by which they are supposed to seek truth? What in fact have men of other faiths to say to Christians? Is it in any way different from what Christians have believed it to be? Granted that the listening in dialogue may mean a better under-

[19] See Vilmos Vajta, *Theology in Dialog*, in *The Gospel and Unity*, Minneapolis, 1971, pp. 28-30.

[20] See P. Rossano, *Dialogue with the non-Christian religions*, in *Bulletin*, Secretariatus pro non Christianis, 17 (1971), pp. 106-7.

[21] See G. Gusdorf, *Dialogue et Verité*, in *Oecumenica*, op. cit., pp. 93-119.

[22] See his *Chrétiens en dialogue*, Paris, 1964, p. 17; see also his article, *De fundamento dialogi Ecclesiae cum mundo in natura catholicitatis ad effectum deducendae*, in *Acta Congressus Internationalis de Theologia Concilii Vaticani II*, Roma, 1968, pp. 652-661.

standing of men of other faiths, how and why should it mean a better understanding of our own Christian faith? Does God speak through men of other faiths? What are the challenges, if any, that they make which constrain Christians to examine their own faith?

We, Christians, know that the fullness of the mystery of Christ will be revealed only at the end of time and that therefore it is our task to grow in the realization of this mystery through sharing with others. The mystery of Christ and of his redemptive work is complete; nothing is wanting to it. But our experience of Christ and our living of Christ's life is incomplete and admits progress [23]. Our incompleteness in the possession of Christ and of his redemption, our realization that we are not perfect and have not yet arrived at the state of full religious communion with the divine Truth, and the mystery of our striving for greater knowledge of Christ: these make listening and learning an imperative. In other words, it is of the nature of the pilgrim Church to be a listening Church in realizing the fullness of Christ and of his plan of salvation. The purpose of listening in dialogue is not only to learn about someone else's faith but also to learn about ourselves. The dialogue as a quest for the divine Truth may prompt the Christian to reconsider not only his communication of such a Truth but also his own grasp of it. With reference to the non-Christian partner's search after truth, the Declaration of Vatican II on Religious Freedom observes, « Truth, however, is to be sought after in a manner proper to the dignity of the human person and his social nature. The inquiry is to be free, carried on with the aid of teaching or instruction, communication and dialogue, in the course of which men explain to one another the truth they have discovered, or think they have discovered, in order thus to assist one another in the quest after truth. Moreover, as the truth is discovered, it is by a personal assent that men are to adhere to it » [24].

It is possible to carry on the dialogue in which the partners

[23] The promise of Christ which is essential for the discovery of truth, « When he comes who is the Spirit of truth, he will guide you into all the truth » (John 16.13), has an important role in the development of Christian dogma, and can be interpreted in terms of dialogue.

[24] N. 3. Translation by the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, Dublin.

are faithful to what they believe, yet progress is made towards the truth, without the whole enterprise being condemned to syncretism or fanaticism. Without betraying one's belief or compromising it in any way, the Christian partner communicates to the other what he believes and experiences and witnesses to truth that belongs to Christ, the Gospel, the Church. Once the fraternal relations of profound respect for the partner in dialogue, of openness and trust, have been acknowledged, which are something different from fixed propositions, a more complete knowledge can develop in the course of dialogue, along with the elimination of prejudice and closer collaboration. One can certainly and validly move from a position shared in common to a further, more perfect position.

Here there is more than the question of listening to men of other faiths in order to know more about them and to share their religious experience. It entails an attitude of humility. Not long ago a Hindu said to one of our missionaries: « You see, we know a certain amount about Christianity from a Hindu point of view; what we want is to learn about it from a Christian point of view ». To this our missionary was able to reply, « We in turn would be glad to learn more about Hinduism from the Hindu point of view ». In this interchange we can see the intention of genuine listening, the beginning of a genuine dialogue, a possible meeting of minds and a possible sharing of spiritual experience. A willingness to learn from others, a humility to listen to others' views, a readiness to accept guidance in knowing one another's faith, and this too by real, personal contact and living experience, and not through some kind of instruction or teaching, is the first step in dialogue.

The next step is to find, when the Christian partner meets a non-Christian, a great deal of common ground, fully aware that he is a man whose religious faith proceeds from premises other than the Christian man's. The Christian will approach him as a person, one of the wonderful works of God and of his grace, who carries about with him the *imago Dei*. With this perspective the approach becomes sacred, for the Christian partner is treading on holy ground, meeting a person with profound religious aspirations and experiences. The Christian is in contact with a person in whom God is at work and hence he will not be surprised that he is moved, as the Christian him-

self is moved, by the same realities of birth and life and death. Both the partners share the same awe and religious wonder at the immensities beyond our understanding presented by the mystery of man and the world. The Vatican II's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions says:

> « From his different religions, man seeks the answer to his riddles and problems of human existence; these exercise him no less deeply today than in the past: What is man? What is the meaning and purpose of life? What are goodness and sin? What is the origin and purpose of suffering? Which is the way to attain true happiness? What is death, judgement and reward after death? What, lastly, is that ultimate and indescribable mystery, embracing the whole of our existence, which is both our origin and our end? » [25]

The Christian also discovers that his response to the problems of life is not far different from the non-Christian's, notwithstanding differences. Worship and prayer directed to God, a sense of right and wrong, a sense of guilt, the hope of mercy and pardon, some glimpse at the meaning of right relationship with the divine, a longing to realize it, a reverent attitude to human life, a respect for human values, all these are common religious ground. Again, to quote the same Declaration,

> « From ancient times down to the present day there is found in various peoples a certain recognition of that hidden power which is present in history and human affairs, and in fact sometimes an acknowledgement of a supreme Godhead, or even of a Father. This recognition and acknowledgement give those people's lives a deep and pervading religious sense. With the advance of the civilizations with which they are connected, these religions endeavour to use more refined concepts and more developed language to answer these questions. » [26]

The common religious ground has a similarity of structure and dialectic in mankind's thinking and experience about his relations with the sacred, for this common religious ground universally expresses itself in myths and religious philosophies [27].

[25] N. 1. Translation by the Catholic Truth Society, London.

[26] N. 2.

[27] See Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, London, 1960; Eliade has shown that the hierophany, the manifestation of the holy in a sacred stone, perhaps the humblest of all hierophanies, and the manifestation in the Incarnation, that mysterium tremendum, both speak of the Sacred accepting self-limitation. « there are of course great differences between the innumerable hierophanies; but one should never lose sight of the fact that their structure and dialectic are always the same. » Ibid. p. 126. It is this similarity of structure and dialectic in mankind's thinking about his relations with the sacred, which confirms the fact of common origin of mankind and of its innate religious sense.

Myths, symbols, mental exercises of meditation and concentration produce ontological transformations in the religious person and thus constitute fundamental experiences of the divine. Rituals are primarily a re-enactment of the sacred prototypes, the repetitions of the actions of divine beings or mythical ancestors. Participants in the ritual become identified with the sacred past and thus perpetuate the sacred traditions as they reestablish the principles by which the group lives and functions. Existentially, myths and rites and spiritual disciplines confront the religious man with the image of himself and of his world as related to the Supreme Being, and his acceptance of this image of himself and of the world, finding ultimate meaning in the religious relationship to the Supreme Being, constitute a spiritual rebirth.

Thirdly, a further step in the dialogue is based on the principle of the creating and redeeming love of God to man. For when the Christian partner in dialogue meets the men of other faiths, he finds that God is at work in them already. The Christian partner can never anticipate God; he can only become his fellow-worker and unveil the hidden presence of God in men of other faiths [28]. Now, if God is at work pressing in upon the consciousness of other believers, as he presses in upon that of the Christian believer, then it can clearly be presumed that God does not wholly fail of some response in men of other faiths, just as he finds a response in the Christian. This response being the best, the Christian believer looks for what is true, good and noble in the religious experience of the non-Christians, fully convinced that all truth comes from God and is the evidence of his presence. This does not mean that Christians remain satisfied with anything less than ' the truth as it is in Jesus Christ '. But it is only just on the part of the Chris-

[28] St Paul has testified at Lystra that God has left no nation without ' some clue to his nature '. (Acts 14.17) From this we can conclude that God has left no single individual without some such clue, some *testimonium internum Spiritus*.

tian partner to recognize God's activity wherever he finds truth and love in the experience of men of other faiths. Success in dialogue depends on the ability of the Christian partner to discover the active principle in the other man's religious experience, the truth that impresses him and moves his will in his experience and life. It is in the discovery of this active principle that the Christian partner finds him co-operating with God. As the Declaration of the Vatican II on non-Christian religions says:

> « The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions. She has a sincere respect for those ways of acting and living, those moral and doctrinal teachings which may differ in many respects from what she holds and teaches, but which none the less often reflect the brightness of that Truth which is the light of all men. » [29]

If then the basis of inter-religious dialogue is the presence and activity of God in men of other faiths, how are we to understand this divine presence and activity? How far can we suppose a prevenience of Christ in non-Christian men? Christ is the light of the World, of which he is the Lord. He loves the world which he died to save. Because God in Christ has reconciled the world to himself, we affirm solidarity with all men, especially with men of other faiths who share actively his redeeming influence. It is through dialogue with other religions that we can discover in them ' the seeds of the Word of God ' [30]. It is in this sense, it appears to us, that we have to understand the active presence of Christ in men of other faiths. The universal appeal and approach of Christ to all men is appreciated to the full by both the Christian partner and the man of other faith only in connection with the proclamation of the Gospel and the presence of the Church [31].

Finally, the Christian partner in dialogue should know the language of the heart [32]. Men of other faiths claim that by their

[29] N. 2.

[30] The Christian in dialogue attributes what he hears to the fullness of Christ, as St Paul says that « all things are ours ». The knowledge of other religions adds insights to the doctrine of the logos.

[31] See G. Johnston, *The Christian Mission and Christ's Prevenience*, in *Theology Today*, 1963, pp. 31-42.

[32] Pascal impressingly stated that divine truths reach man's mind through his heart, and not vice versa. He observes, « The saints, on the contrary (i. e., different from rational pride), will say, when speaking of divine matters, that one must love these matters in order to know them, and one enters into truth only through charity ... » See *De l'art de persuader*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, Paris, 1963, p. 355.

religion they meet the living God. The Christian recognizes that God is present in them when they pray and when they lead a life of genuine religious spirit. But then the problem is how real is a meeting taking place and how does God make himself known to them in their religious experience. To enter into the inner experience of men of other faiths calls for greater effort of imagination, of reflection and of courage; at times, it entails great sacrifice on the part of the Christian, for it may mean giving up one's own cultural and social modes of thinking and acting. This calls for a patient attempt to listen to their response and witnessing to God's active presence in them and to share in their religious experience as far as the Christian faith would allow. Inter-religious dialogue will enable us to probe more deeply, and come into contact more intimately, with the expression and the reality of their profound selves and to discover the authentic ways of living and expressing the Christian faith itself. It will reveal to the Christian many riches of his own faith which he perhaps may not have perceived. Thus it can become a sharing in friendship of the common quest for God and for brotherhood among his sons.

3) Relationship between Evangelization and Dialogue

After describing the origin, nature, scope, and the presuppositions of dialogue, we can draw the following conclusions concerning the relationship between inter-religious dialogue and evangelization.

If the objective aims of dialogue are mutual understanding, a greater drawing together, and a mutual spiritual enrichment, then dialogue has a function distinct from evangelization and mission. As the Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* teaches, « If, in our desire to respect a man's freedom and dignity, his conversion to the true faith is not the immediate object of our dialogue with him, we nevertheless try to help him and to dispose him

for a fuller sharing of ideas and convictions. »[33] The distinct and specific function of dialogue within the Church appears legitimate and serves an essential purpose of the Church « to promote unity and brotherhood among the peoples », and to strengthen the ties of the human family by making all its members more aware of the identity of origin and purpose. But this activity is not made use of as a tool, intentionally subordinated immediately to evangelization and mission. Sincere mutual understanding, inquiry into the work of God in the world, understanding of the richness and variety in the unity of the human family, the reverent discovery of the treasures of creation and of the action of God in men who seek him, the knowledge and promotion of ethical and social values in individuals and religions in as far as they represent the authentic expressions of the religious conscience of their adherents, the awareness of man's wanderings and uncertainties and of his attempts to solve them as he faces the human situation, the problems of man's ultimate concern, of God and of his relationship to him, the promotion of unity and brotherhood in the human race: all these concerns which characterise the inter-religious dialogue cannot be outside the concerns of the Church[34]. Hence, there can be an inter-religious dialogue which in its nature and scope is not yet really and truly an evangelising activity and mission.

This distinction between these two types of activity of the Church can create tensions which may lead to extreme positions with regard to the understanding of the mission of the Church in the contemporary world.

The first tension consists in the fact that if dialogue has its own scope, namely, a mutual understanding and sharing of religious experience so that the partners come closer together to the religious truth, and that if dialogue is good and legitimate in itself, why then should we engage in evangelical activity? Why not to stop with the dialogue itself, especially when it appears more suited to our times and to dispel the suspicions by men of other faiths of proselytism, spiritual colonialism?

[33] N. 79. Translation by the Catholic Truth Society, London.

[34] See Cardinal Paolo Marella, *Nature, presuppositions and limits of the Dialogue with non-Christians*, in *Bulletin*, Secretariatus pro non Christianis, 1969 March, pp. 10 f.

In fact, there are some, though few among Christian thinkers, who maintain that the mission of today has as its aim not the proclamation of the Gospel to men and of faith in Christ, but the mere promotion of the spiritaul values contained in the non-Christian religions.[35] Some others think that the age of the missions is over and we are now living in an age of coexistence, collaboration and dialogue. Humanity has come of age, has reached the age of dialogue.[36]

We have to meet these extreme positions squarely. Evangelization is the duty of every Christian and of the whole Church. This duty and urgency follow from the mandate of Christ to his Apostles and to the whole Church. No other activity, however noble, can substitute it. We cannot exaggerate the function of dialogue to such an extent as to minimize or, worse still, to do away with the evangelical activity and mission, or the obedience to God's word, which is the essential character of the Church. Dialogue is by no means everything since it dos not eliminate other functions of the Church. In concrete, every activity of the Christian falls within the global vision of evangelization. There is no doubt that the dialogic activity is included in God's plans and serves his purposes and that this conviction may facilitate the way to evangelization and mission. Hence, dialogue is an integral part of the Church's mission of evangelization.

Besides, inter-religious dialogue itself, by its inner dynamism, on the part of the Christian calls for evangelization; for no Christian can be insensible to the call of Christ that he witnesses through dialogue in the non-Christian partner. This can be illustrated by the following incident. The Rev. Daniel T. Niles, General Secretary of the East Asia Christian Conference and Chairman of the World Student Christian Federation, states thus:

« The person to whom the Gospel is addressed is what he is because of Jesus Christ, and that truth determines what the evangelist finally is concerned to do or say. I remember a meeting which I was addressing at Coimbatore in India, mostly Hindu, mostly professional men. At the end of the meeting a

[35] See H. Halbfas, *Fundamentalkatechetik*, Stuttgart, 1968, pp. 240 ff.

[36] See Kaj Baago, *The post-colonial crisis of Missions*, in *The International Review of Missions*, 1966, pp. 322-332.

Hindu lawyer said to me, ' Mr. Niles, I want to ask you a question '. I said, ' Yes '. He said, ' Who is the greater man, you or Mahatma Gandhi? '. I smiled, and I said, ' Mahatma Gandhi, of course '. And then he said, ' Morally, who is the greater man, you or Mahatma Gandhi? ' I said, ' Mahatma Gandhi, of course '. He said, ' Spiritually, who is the greater man, you or Mahatma Gandhi? ' ' Mahatma Gandhi, of course '. He said, ' All right. Now, if you were taken to Mahatma Gandhi, what would you say to him as an evangelist? ' I said, ' I would tell him exactly what I would tell any man. What have you done about what God has done for you in Jesus Christ? ' In the presence of that question, moral greatness, spiritual excellence, intellectual eminence are quite irrelevant. Mahatma Gandhi is what he is because of Jesus Christ. He stands within that context. It is in Jesus Christ that evangelism happens. Believer and unbeliever meet in Jesus Christ. » [37]

Already at the level of dialogue we meet men of other faiths in their religious best; we share in the common religious experience; we listen and receive each other's spiritual riches and values; we are aware of each other's differences. Thus the ground is made ready for evangelization, for evangelization in the context of dialogue is the proclamation and communication in a concrete and existential way of the Gospel message to those who do not share it. Although at the level of dialogue the Gospel message is made bare and made known to the men of other faiths, they see it as Christianity's own claim, as valid as his own faith. But at the level of evangelization men of other faiths are invited to accept the Gospel message in all its entirety and exigency.

The listener is by definition a person who expects to hear something. He is waiting for a revelation which will be a revelation of the speaker's mind, an important indication of his own thought and aspiration, an important bridge between two minds, trying to bring about mutual understanding with regard to ultimate truths. There comes a moment when the Christian in all humility, respect, and prudence proclaims the ultimate validity of the Christian faith to men of other faiths. We have

[37] D. T. Niles, *The Evangelistic Situation,* in *Union Seminary Quarterly Review,* XV (1960), pp. 112 f.

already said that the dialogic partners, when they meet among themselves, meet God as present in both. In and through dialogue the Christian partner discovers the cultural, philosophical, and religious points of view of the men of other faiths in order to enable them to understand the Christian message and receive it fruitfully. Herein comes an important function of dialogue; namely, to create in the hearers the thought patterns, ideas, expressions which are better suited to the understanding of the evangelical message itself. Here thus comes in the oft-repeated problem of the necessity of the indigenization of the Christian theology and of the life of the Church.

Inter-religious dialogue with men of other faiths, far from lessening evangelical zeal, makes the task of evangelization more inspiring and meaningful. As the Christian evangelist discovers through dialogue the ' rays of divine light ' and ' seeds of the Word ', present in other religions, and becomes aware of the working of God's grace in the lives of men of other faiths, he realizes the need of evangelization in a confident and serene zeal. [38]

The second tension consists in the urgency of the evangelical work itself. Being suspicious of the outcome of the dialogue for many reasons, both practical and theoretical, some feel that dialogue is not the answer to the problems that arise in the mission work, and that only evangelization should be undertaken in all earnest. They think that dialogue would favour syncretism, watering down of the uniqueness and transcendence of the Gospel message and the claims of Christianity. Some urge the command of the mission so strongly as to leave no room for dialogue or to look on it with diffidence.

We can speak of a threefold dialogue with non-Christians. The first is the dialogue between the Church and the men of other faiths or no faith, either to seek together the truth in some particular field or to collaborate in finding solutions to the great problems facing mankind today. This has been outlined in *Gaudium et Spes* thus:

« We also turn our thoughts to all who acknowledge God, and who preserve in their traditions precious elements of re-

[38] See the report of the workshop on Dialogue with Hindus and other Religions in India, *Light and Life we seek to share,* The All India Consultation on Evangelization, Patna, 1973, pp. 315 ff.

ligion and humanity. We want frank conversation to compel us all to receive the inspirations of the Spirit faithfully and to measure up to them energetically.

For our part, the desire for such dialogue, which can lead to truth through love alone, excludes no one, though an appropriate measure of prudence must undoubtedly be exercised. We include those who cultivate beautiful qualities of the human spirit, but do not yet acknowledge the Source of these qualities. »[39]

This does however include for Christians the witnessing to their own faith, and thus it is in its own way related to the commission given to the Church to spread the Gospel. « In pursuit of her mission, the Church preaches the Gospel to all men and dispenses the treasures of grace. Thus, by imparting knowledge of the divine and natural law, she everywhere contributes to strengthening peace and to placing brotherly relations between individuals and peoples on solid ground ...[40] By virtue of her mission to shed on the whole world the radiance of the Gospel message, and to unify under one Spirit all men of whatever nation, race, or culture, the Church stands forth as a sign of that brotherliness which allows honest dialogue and invigorates it. »[41] This dialogue is based on the recognition of the dignity and value of the human person and on the acceptance of pluralism.

The second kind of dialogue goes together with evangelization and mission and means that the evangelical activity is carried on in the spirit and style of dialogue.[42] Evangelization cannot be carried out any longer except in the dialogical spirit of respect, of service, of attention, of esteem and of openness to our interlocuters. The Church must enter into dialogue with the world in which it lives. It has Christ's Gospel to give and to make all men share it. Dialogue is a recognized method of the apostolate. For it becomes obvious in dialogue that there are various ways of coming to the light of faith and it is possible to make them all converge on the same goal. Divergent ways often serve to complete each other. They encourage us to think on different lines. They really force us to go deeper into the subject of our investigation and to find better ways of expressing the truth. It is in dialogue that others can respond to the message of the Gospel, if they will, and assimilate it gradually. This kind of dialogue belongs to the structure of the work of evangelization, proclamation of the Gospel.

[39] N. 92. Translation from *The Documents of Vatican* II, ed. by Walter M. Abbott.

[40] N. 89.

[41] N. 92.

[42] See *Ad Gentes*, N. 11. This spirit is described by Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, Part III.

The third type of dialogue is the inter-religious dialogue with which we have been dealing all along in this essay. It is a dialogue at a specific religious level. The dialogic partners must be careful to avoid exposing themselves to dangerous risks such as syncretism, relativism of truth, and so on. But in any encounter of different faiths there is this risk.

Finally, the Christian partenr in dialogue does not and cannot put his faith in doubt. He has to really take the attitude of a committed Christian and the standpoint of the believer in the unique saviourhood of Christ and accept Christ in faith as God's final and full revelation. There is no watering down of the demands of the Christian message. Though the mystery of Christ and of his message is complete and definitive, as we have said above, the understanding and living of this mystery can grow ever more, and this through dialogue by sharing the insights and riches of the religious traditions of mankind. The dialogue partner does not seek merely common ground of agreement and similarities; he is also deeply aware of the differences between the two faiths. The Christian partner in dialogue does not change or renounce his own faith. He does not begin dialogue with an 'epoché' on Revelation and the Church.[43] There is no doubt that the partners, both Christian and non-Christian, need the methodological 'epoché' which means suspension of pre-conceived judgement before the religious phenomena in order to let these speak for themselves. The religious 'epoché' does not imply surrender of one's own religious convictions. Some think that the only way to escape the accusation of partiality is to assert *a priori* the fundamental equality of all religions. Such a position, as we see, is inadmissible because

[43] See P. Rossano, *Dialogue with the non-Christian religions*, art. cit., p. 106.

their *a priori* assertion itself implies a preconceived judgement or begging the question. To assert *a priori* the fundamental equality of all religions it would be necessary to posit a metaphysical locus, so to say, above all particular religions, and such a perspective higher than the individual religions that actually exist is abstract and idealistic and unreal. There is no such universal religion, except in thought, which would include the essence of all religions. What is to be essential of religion is already a disputed question, even understanding religion as a man-made thing, and not as a positive response from God to man's religious aspirations.

The Christian faith contains the following points as essential in its relation to world religions. While it is true that God has been in some way apprehended in all religions, it is only in the revelation in Jesus Christ that God is fully and finally known, and what God has done for man in Jesus Christ is of universal and final significance. Muslims worship Allah on the authority of what has been revealed through Muhammad in the *Qur'ān*. The primitives worship the Supreme Being and the Spirits and supernatural Powers on the basis of what their myths and traditions relate. On the authority of their sacred texts the Hindus believe that the One all-pervading and all-transcending God or the Absolute is the source and ground of of all beings and that the ultimate goal of man consists solely in the liberation from transmigratory existence and in the realization of one's union in love, or of one's identity in knowledge with the Absolute by means of various forms of asceticism, deep meditation and loving and trusting recourse to God. In the various forms of Buddhism, again on the authority of their sacred texts, the basic impermanence of this changing world is recognized and men strive to achieve a state of complete liberation and reach the highest level of illumination. This is not the place to treat elaborately of the variety of religious richness in insights and experiences of mankind in the course of history. We can only indicate the characteristics of any truly religious experience.[44] They are: a consciousness of being in contact with what is above and beyond the limitations of life

[44] See Herbert H. Farmer, *Revelation and Religion*, London, 1954; Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, London, 1950.

in this world, with 'the supernatural'; the consciousness that this 'supernatural' meets man with an absolute demand; the assurance that from the supernatural comes our ultimate and final succour; a distinctive type of feeling associated with the experience, a feeling of awe and fascination, a sense of the numinous, as Rudolf Otto calls it.

In the light of this, Christian faith holds that what is partially and imperfectly experienced in the lives and teachings of the religious founders, prophets, religious men is fully and perfectly found in Jesus Christ and his Gospel. The imperfect and incomplete response of the Church to Christ and his Gospel message differs from the imperfect and partial character of the response and experience of men of other faiths in this that it is not made to be for ever imperfect and partial by the very origin and nature of the religious tradition, for in Jesus Christ and in him alone is presented to man the unlimited and complete demand of God and the unrestricted and unlimited grace which God gives to mankind.

Christianity's claim to uniqueness which is all inclusive is based on the all-inclusive uniqueness of Christ, God-man.

This claim appears intolerant to men of other faiths. Are there not other pathways to God which are equally good? Are not other forms of worship equally rewarding and enriching? Are not other ethical systems as high and just as the Christian? Why should Christianity alone claim to uniqueness? It is important to point out in this context that Christianity does not amount to just a pathway to God, just a form of worship, or an ethical pattern. Christianity cannot be reduced to any or all of these three structures. And followers of other faiths also would not like to narrow down their faiths only to these terms. For they also admit 'the initiative of God' or that God somehow seeks man. The considerations of other reigions as purely natural are no longer true in the light of what we find in them. Men of other faiths believe that their worship is not just rewarding or enriching but that the life of God touches the life of man. We have outlined above the work of the Holy Spirit in men of other faiths and their religions. What men of other faiths seek and find in their God or gods finds its fulfilment, its completion, its ultimate source and meaning, in the revelation that comes through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus

Christ. Because of this belief the Christian is compelled by the nature of his faith to be an evangelist and missionary. Christianity is to be proclaimed not as something added on to other religions but as a new demand of God intervening in man's life and history and a new response on the part of man to God's demand, to be perfectly and efficaciously realized in and through Jesus Christ. While Christianity recognizes that men of other faiths believe in God who is Supreme and is present to men and helps them to reach him and express this belief in their creeds and cultus, Christians believe that God has been active in his world not only in a general way so that all men seek him and find him, but in a particular way, for God has revealed himself in the person and work of Jesus Christ and in him is realized for all mankind in an eminent and final manner the will and purpose of God. Christianity is not a revelation in the sense of new religious wisdom but a revelation in the sense of salvation. As St Paul states, the Gospel is ' the power of God unto salvation '. Christian message proclaims the presence of God in his redeeming power, to succour men in their response to the demand of God.

Inclusiveness does not mean that in the inter-faith dialogue the Christian partner should surrender his faith's claim to uniqueness and give up his belief in the absolute character of the Gospel message as the normative concept of religion and take up the tenet of the one, universal religion, hidden in all religions as the normative concept. The non-Christian partner has a perfect right to maintain such a position if he wants, but cannot demand this of the Christian partner, for such a demand would itself involve intolerance and exclusiveness on his part, which he intends to avoid and for the reason of which he wants the Christian partner to adopt a universalist concept of religion. Besides, such a position would lead to arbitrary dogmatism and a frustration of genuine inter-faith dialogue. [45]

[45] Hendrik Kraemer, *World Cultures and World Religions,* London, 1961, p. 364, n. 1.

Conclusion

It is interesting to observe that the Constitution *Ad Gentes,* dedicated to evangelization and mission, urges constantly the missionaries to undertake dialogue with men of other faiths: « So as to be able fruitfully to bear this witness to Christ, the faithful ... should be familiar with their national and religious traditions; with joy and reverence they should bring to light the seeds of the Word hidden in them ... they should make every effort to stir up in them a keener desire for divinely revealed truth and love. Just as Christ searched the hearts of men, and through a truly human dialogue, led them to the divine light, so his disciples, thoroughly imbued with Christ's Spirit, should get to know the people among whom they live and associate with them so that these people may learn, in sincere and patient dialogue, what riches God — the generous One — has bestowed on the nations. At the same time the faithful should strive to clarify these riches with the light of the Gospel, to set them free, and to bring them back under the dominion of God, the Saviour. » [46] The Declaration *Nostra Aetate,* dedicated to the relations of the Church to the non-Christian religions, and so to dialogue, states firmly the necessity and urgency of evangelization and mission: « The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions. She has a sincere respect for those ways of acting and living, those moral and doctrinal teachings which may differ in many respects from what she holds and teaches, but which nonetheless often reflect the brightness of that Truth which is the light of all men. But she proclaims, and is bound to proclaim unceasingly, Christ, who is ' the way, the truth, and the life ' (Jn 14. 6). In him men find the fulness of their religious life and in him God has reconciled all things to himself (cf. 2 Cor. 5. 18-19). » [47]

This means that according to the Council dialogue and evangelization are inseparable; that in carrying out the mandate of evangelization the Church wishes to adopt the dialogical method and spirit. This also means that the announcement of the Gospel message should, in order to be able to generate faith in a per-

[46] N. 11.
[47] N. 2.

sonal way in others, take into account seriously the socio-cultural and religious situation of men of other faiths and of their religious experience.

Both dialogue and evangelization pertain to the integral activity of the Church. It is not one or the other but both, and both belong to the integral vision of the Christian in his approach to the men of other faiths. In the concrete, taking account of the circumstances and contexts of individual men, the Christian partner may be able to reach the other only at the dialogical level; in other circumstances he may be able to evangelize. In practice, it may happen that as the result of the dialogue the Hindu partner becomes a better Hindu, a Buddhist a more convinced Buddhist, a Muslim a better Muslim, and so on. It may be that thanks to the dialogue the non-Christian partner purifies his own faith, gets rid of his superstitions and anti-social practices or customs and thus becomes a better man religiously and socially. It is not the Christian's business to see to it that the Hindu, for example, becomes a better Hindu. But there is the obligation for the Christian, when occasion offers and prudence permits, to make the invitation to men of other faiths to accept Christ and his message as the final and full revelation and salvation.

Evangelization and development

(Reflections of a Priest-Sociologist)

JOHN J. CARROLL, S. J.

THE RATIONALIZATION PROCESS

On the island of Palawan in the Philippines there are some caves which have been excavated by scientists associated with the National Museum.[1] Radio-carbon dating of charcoal from campfires and other remains indicates that these caves were the site of human habitation at various periods beginning some fifty thousand years ago and terminating about four thousand years ago. The men who inhabited them were tool-makers who manufactured crude choppers by cracking off pieces of stone from larger cores found in a river bed. And for the modern man, perhaps one of the most striking conclusions at which the scientists have arrived is this: during all of that long period of more than forty thousand years, there was *no significant change* in the technology of the cave-dwellers. There was no attempt to improve the product by shaping the core before cracking it, or by forming a blade, and little attempt to sharpen the edge by secondary flaking. The time-span involved here staggers the mind: four thousand years would take us back beyond Abraham, ten thousand to the invention of agriculture; but for a period of more than forty thousand years — two thousand generations — sons learned from their fathers how to make those choppers, made them just as their fathers had made them, and taught their sons to do the same. This is a useful image to keep in mind perhaps, when one speaks of a « traditional » culture.

[1] Robert B. Fox, *The Tabon Caves* (Manila: National Museum, 1970).

A moment's reflection will make even more clear the vast difference — one wants to say the qualitative difference — in culture between the man of the Tabon Caves and modern man. One might consider, for example, the development in transportation technology from the time of Lindberg's flight across the Atlantic (1927) to the Apollo moon-flights of the late 1960's. In 1927 the greatest achievement in the whole history of transportation technology was symbolized by one man who had entrusted his life to the reliability of a single gasoline engine for some twenty-eight hours through the darkness and cold of the North Atlantic route. Yet the first man to walk on the moon was born within a couple of years of Lindberg's flight; and in the ensuing forty years all of the discoveries in rocket power, guidance, tracking and recovery systems, metallurgy, and dozens of other sciences and skills that spelled the difference between a trans-Atlantic flight and a moonwalk, were achieved.

The crucial difference between the culture of the cave and that of modern man seems to lie in what Max Weber described as *rationalization*, i. e. the transition from a society guided by tradition toward one guided by experimental reason — in which process more and more areas of life are subjected to the control of reason, planning, and organization, and are directed to the achievement of goals chosen by man himself.[2] A major part of Weber's life-work consisted in tracing the impact of this process, which he believed to be characteristic of Western civilization, on science, political thought, historical scholarship, music, painting and architecture, jurisprudence, religion, and — of course — economic life. All of these are seen as conditioned in the West by man's systematic effort to understand by experiment and reason the forces operating in his physical and social world, to control these forces, and to direct them to his chosen goals.

It seems useful to take this concept as a reference point in a discussion of evangelization and development. For thereby development, which might otherwise be taken as referring only to changes in economic structures, is seen as part of a much broader process which has important implications also for the

[2] See, for example, Weber's *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, tr. bv A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1947), p. 123.

ideological, social, moral and religious levels of life. And it is on these levels that the interaction between the Church in its effort to communicate the Gospel message, and the society attempting to achieve economic development, seems most significant. In what follows, then, I shall attempt to identify some of the more general and important aspects of this process as it is taking place in the developing world today, and the challenges which it offers to the Church as the latter pursues its mission of preaching the Gospel. Then I shall reflect on certain possible reactions of the Church to these challenges, basing my reflections largely on the experience of the local church in the one developing nation — the Philippines — which I happen to know reasonably well and at first hand. Since I am a believer in the uniqueness of each historical situation, I shall not claim that the Philippine offers any specific lessons to be learned by others; but reflections on one concrete experience may at least raise questions which others, in their own historically unique situations, may fruitfully ask themselves.

The Urgency of Development

Perhaps the most powerful indicator of man's increased control over the forces of nature is his increasing life expectancy. Estimates based on tombstone inscriptions suggest that life expectancy at birth in the Roman Empire during the first and second centuries after Christ, was perhaps thirty years, while for the urban population of the western part of the Empire it was between fifteen and twenty-five years.[3] Today, average life expectancy in the economically more developed nations is over seventy-one years, and in the less developed nations over fifty-two years[4]. The major gains in Europe have been achieved in the past three centuries, initiated by improved agricultural techniques, continuing through the industrial revolution and culmi-

[3] John D. Durand, « Mortality Estimates from Roman Tombstone Inscriptions, » *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LXV, No. 4 (January 1960), pp. 365-73.

[4] Mercedes B. Concepción, « A Demographer's View of the World Population Plan of Action, » (Liege, Belgium: International Union for the Scientific Study of Population), p. 9.

nating in the medical revolution following on the great discoveries of Pasteur [5]. Of the three great terrors from which the man of the Middle Ages prayed deliverance — « A peste, fame, et bello, libera nos, Domine! » — and which Malthus listed among the « positive checks » on population growth, science has virtually eliminated the first two from the industrialized world.

The reduction of the death rate, by which the blessing of longer life was achieved, brought with it a greatly increased rate of population growth, which rose to about 1.5 percent annually in parts of Europe toward the end of the last century and then dropped again as the birth rate also declined. Those nations and groups which had successfully modernized their economic life were able to absorb this increase, while for the others there was the « escape valve » of migration to the New World. [6] The United States and Japan had more rapid rates of growth during their periods of development, but the sequence of events was roughly the same. Today the growth rate in the more developed nations taken together is less than 0.9 percent. [7]

The situation in the developing nations is vastly different, largely because the timing and sequence of events has been different. The medical revolution in the form of public health services imported from the West has had a massive impact, largely within a period of one or two generations, and *before* there has been a real agricultural or industrial revolution in these nations. In many areas, for example, malaria has been quickly eliminated as a major cause of death by the simple expedient of fogging the swamps with DDT; in combination with the use of antibiotics, this technique reduced the death rate in Ceylon by almost half within a period of seven years — from 2.2 percent annually to 1.2 percent. [8] Artesian wells to supply pure drinking water, and immunization against smallpox and cholera have had similar effects on other killer diseases. The birth rate has not dropped nearly as quickly as the death rate; in fact, in some places it seems to have increased with improved

[5] Ralph Thomlinson, *Population Dynamics* (New York: Random House, 1965), pp. 74-97.
[6] W. D. Barrie, *The Growth and Control of World Population* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), pp. 57-84.
[7] Concepción, p. 2.
[8] Thomlinson, p. 94.

maternal health. Consequently, the rate of population increase has risen to 2.4 percent annually for the developing nations taken together, [9] an overall rate which disguises important variations by country and region and which incorporates some of the highest growth rates ever experienced by national populations. And finally, the nations which are now undergoing this growth make up more than two thirds of the world's population; hence it is difficult to conceive of migration providing the kind of safety valve for them which it did for Europe.

At 2.4 percent annual growth, a population will double in about 29 years, quadruple in 58, increase eight times over in 87, and so on until something slows it down. Moreover, the « demographic momentum » of Third World populations with a high proportion of young people who have not yet entered upon their reproductive periods (in the Philippines, 46 percent are below fifteen years of age) is such that the « braking time » required for a drop in the total number of births is very long; on any reasonable hypothesis other than a disastrous increase in the death rate, these populations will continue to grow rapidly well into the next century, and will double or triple in size before leveling off. [10]

The challenge posed by rapid population growth in the Third World is only too evident in these days of tragic famine in Africa and potential famine elsewhere, of anxiety about changing rainfall and weather patterns and the low level of the world food reserves. Whatever else it may be, it is inescapably a challenge to economic development. But this is not to say that the pressure of population is the only motive force for economic development, or even the most powerful one. One could mention also the desire for national power, prestige, and self-respect among the nations of the Third World; or the desire for education and the cultivation of the mind which becomes possible only when a certain material surplus has been achieved. But what the facts suggest is that, once exposed to the rationalization process, man quickly finds that it has dynamics and constraints of its own. The upsurge of population growth brought about by science in one area of life — control of disease — ap-

[9] Concepción, p. 2.
[10] Thomas Frejka, *The Future of Population Growth* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973), p. 73.

pears to be a « point of no return » in the history of a people: somewhat like an airplane crossing the open sea without enough fuel left for a return to the shore from which it took off, a nation which has passed this point *must* drive ahead or else face disaster.

The Strains of Development

A glance at the reality of the developing nations today should dispel any illusion that the dynamics of the rationalization process are necessarily conducive to an orderly type of development, or to the fulfillment of human needs according to some agreed-upon set of priorities. Population growth jointed to a demand for a higher standard of material welfare requires a rapid increase in production; yet these same factors can create obstacles to the achievement of this increase by making competing claims on the limited finances which are available. Given a population of which half are under seventeen years of age as a consequence of a rapid reduction in infant mortality, is the government to invest in education or in irrigation, in health facilities or in roads and factories and the clearing of new land? Even in those areas — mainly in Africa and Latin America — where population density is not great and natural resources exist which could support larger populations, very substantial amounts of money, skill, and time must be invested before they can become productive. Money and skill may perhaps be obtained from abroad, although there tend to be economic and political costs to be incurred in doing so. But the time factor is crucial and the pressure often inexorable. Even though governments attempt to « buy time » for development by policies designed to reduce the birth rate — 90 percent of the population of the less developed world live in countries where such policies have been adopted — [11] the children for whom schools will be needed in the next seven years and jobs in the next fifteen years, have already been born.

There is a tendency also, as the economic pressures on the « little man » build up, for existing resources to be destroyed

[11] Concepción, pp. 3 f.

rather than used more effectively — e.g. through improper farming of hillside land with resultant erosion, through deforestation with consequent cycles of drought and flood, and through dynamite fishing. In the Philippines and elsewhere it has been noted that fragmentation of landholdings occurs as farm plots are divided and subdivided from generation to generation, producing a class of marginal farmers — many of whom lose ownership of their land through debt and thus contribute to the social and political problem of agricultural tenancy. [12] Other farmers migrate, creating population « implosion » in crowded urban areas and population « displosion » as groups with different cultural backgrounds come into contact — and often conflict — in the cities and on the agricultural frontiers. [13] The bitter war being fought between Filipino Muslims and the Philippine Army in southern Mindanao — to cite a case in point — has as one of its causes the influx of Christian settlers to the area from regions of high population density and depleted soil in the Visayan Islands and northern Luzon. Better-known examples of tragic consequences arising from population displosion could be cited: Israel and the Middle East, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

A recent study of Davao City, an apparently prosperous and dynamic seaport, manufacturing and trading center for southern Mindanao — a study carried out before the Muslim rebellion affected the area — demonstrates in detail how population implosion in combination with other social and economic factors may be producing an hereditary lower class in the Philippines' « land of promise ». [14] The annual rate of population growth for the decade 1960-1970 was 5.5 percent, attributable in large part to migration. Fifty percent of the city's people live on daily per capita incomes of 28 cents (U.S.) or less. This low-income group has the lowest median age in the city's population, the highest crude birth rate, the smallest number of employed workers per household, the lowest educational level for

[12] Marion Brown, « Private Efforts at Reform, » in Peter Dorner, ed., *Land Reform in Latin America* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Land Tenure Center, 1971), pp. 247-50.

[13] The terms « implosion » and « displosion » were first proposed by Philip Hauser.

[14] Robert A. Hackenberg, « The Poverty Explosion » (Davao City: Davao Action Information Center, 1973, mimeo.).

household heads and the largest proportion of high-school age children not attending school. The most disturbing fact of all, perhaps, is that this group belongs in large part to the « modern » labor force — earning a fixed minimum wage doing unskilled and semiskilled work in business and industry — and hence is not likely to benefit from any expansion of these sectors. The author of the study finds that the development which has occurred in Davao — export-oriented and thus not requiring a local middle class as a market, factory-based and thus not requiring craft skills, in an area where unskilled labor is plentiful because of migration — has simply transplanted the traditional rural two-class system and high concentration of income to the urban setting. He also sees the existing middle class of street merchants and small craftsmen, who presently have mobility opportunities — i.e. opportunities to build up their businesses and « get ahead » — and a tendency to limit their families, in danger of being absorbed into the mass of factory workers who have neither. In this case, he concludes, « the separation into a two-class society will be completed, and one more Asian city will be on the road to Calcutta ». [15]

Hackenberg's study illustrates the theme of permanent poverty and increasing inequality arising from the development process itself — or at least from a development policy which focuses on increasing profits and income through the expansion of the modern sector while bypassing the great mass of the population. John Friedmann and Flora Sullivan have analysed this phenomenon in a variety of Third World cities, [16] while Gunnar Myrdal — a recent Nobel Prize winner in economics — has described a similar process taking place in the rural areas of Asia and Latin America. [17] And most recently Robert McNamara, President of the World Bank Group, has made it the theme of two consecutive annual addresses to his Board of Governors. His latest address deserves to be quoted at some length. [18]

[15] Hackenberg, p. 51.

[16] « The Absorption of Labor in the Urban Economy: The Case of Developing Countries, » *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. XXII, No. 3 (April 1974), pp. 385-413.

[17] *The Challenge of World Poverty* (New York: Random House, 1971).

[18] « Address to the Board of Governors, » Nairobi, Kenya, September 24, 1973 (Washington D.C.: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development), pp. 10 f.

> The basic problem of poverty and growth in the developing world can be stated very simply. The growth is not equitably reaching the poor. And the poor are not significantly contributing to growth.
>
> Despite a decade of unprecedented increase in the gross national product of the developing countries, the poorest segments of their populations have received relatively little benefit. Nearly 800 million individuals—40 percent out of a total of two billion—survive on incomes estimated (in U. S. purchasing power) at 30 cents per day in conditions of malnutrition, illiteracy, and squalor. They are suffering poverty in the absolute sense.
>
> * * *
>
> The data suggest that the decade of rapid growth has been accompanied by greater maldistribution of income in many developing countries, and that the problem is most severe in the countryside. There has been an increase in the output of mining, industry, and government—and in the incomes of people dependent on these sectors—but the productivity and income of the small farmer have stagnated.
>
> One can conclude that policies aimed primarily at accelerating economic growth, in most developing countries, have benefitted mainly the upper 40 percent of the population and the allocation of public services and investment funds has tended to strengthen rather than to offset this trend.

In passing it may be noted that these authors do not base their arguments on a theory of exploitation in the Marxist sense. As Myrdal points out, the problem is not so much that the poor are deprived of the product of their labor — although there is some of that — as that they are unneeded by the wealthy, bypassed by progress, and given little opportunity to labor or to produce at all. [19] Against this background, all of the works cited propose a reorientation of development policy in the direction of greater equality and the fuller utilization of human potential — and support this proposal with arguments ranging from the economic through the political to the moral. Among their concrete proposals are the promotion of small industry, agrarian reform and integrated programs of assistance to small farmers, educational reforms emphasizing adult literacy and discouraging « prestige » types of secondary and tertiary education, tax re-

[19] Myrdal, pp. 404-408.

form, and family planning. In various ways they all see the need for a change in international economic relationships also; Myrdal and McNamara in particular argue for the elimination of discriminatory commercial practices on the part of the developed countries and for an increase in foreign assistance.[20] But none of them pretend that these external changes will aid the poor significantly in the absence of internal policy changes.

It is clear that increasing inequality in the developing nations constitutes a critical political problem. For, to a much greater degree than in most of the developed nations, the wealthy — whose immediate interests would be threatened by any attempt to reorient economic policy in favor of the poor — are also the custodians of political power. The threat to their interests appears more serious when it takes the form of mass organizations among the poor — whether labor unions or peasant unions or political parties. For these imply a recourse to power, a sense of class awareness among the poor and a rejection of the role of faithful « clients » toward their « patrons » among the economically secure — a relationship which is frequently a crucial force in the traditional social structure.[21] The tensions and fears thus generated in the elite are thought by some to have been a major factor in the establishment of authoritarian political regimes in the developing countries. Friedmann and Sullivan comment as follows.[22]

> In country after country, those in control of the instruments of economic power have consistently perverted one of the essential purposes of government—to redress major imbalances in the society—by using the power of public office to further entrench their privileged position. Because such practice generates widespread antagonism and hostility, repressive measures tend to be applied against a mounting opposition. Fascist regimes in which the coercive powers of the State are jointly used with private economic power to maintain and widen existing inequalities abound in the developing world . . .

[20] Myrdal, pp. 292-301, 363-85; McNamara, pp. 2-28. It should perhaps be noted that these works were published before the petroleum crisis added its weight to the problems of the developing countries.

[21] Eric R. Wolf, *Peasants* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 86-91.

[22] Freidmann and Sullivan, p. 406.

The present writer would agree in general with the assessment just quoted, while adding certain qualifications. As Myrdal points out, it is uncommon in the Third World for the masses of the poor to be so organized and united as to constitute an imminent danger to the position of the elite.[23] But the « danger » of « subversion » can be a convenient pretext for the seizure of power by an individual or faction within the elite. Other motives or pretexts can lead to the same outcome: the need to put an end to ethnic, regional, or factional conflicts; a demand for unity and discipline in order that the nation may be safe from external enemies and that economic development may be accelerated; the desire to eliminate corruption and to initiate reforms in favor of the poor which an ineffective democracy could not accomplish.

There is the possibility that an authoritarian regime may in fact be an effective instrument for reform and development — the present regime in Peru may be a case in point — but the record thus far does not encourage much optimism. Radical reforms promised at the outset are likely to be abandoned or drastically modified either because they were ill-conceived from the start or because they run counter to the interests of powerful local groups and their foreign supporters. Corruption reappears and may become worse as a new interest group — the military — asserts its claims. Propaganda and « showpiece » projects tend to substitute for genuine, broad reform. The failure of the regime to deliver quickly and fully on its promises, together with the availability of another and apparently more equitable model of development — the Chinese Communist model — encourages the development of an underground opposition. National security and discipline then become primary values; arbitrary imprisonment and worse are used against « subversives. » At the same time, the complex nature of many of the issues, and government control of the channels of information, make it most difficult to form a balanced judgment on the overall situation and on the direction in which it is moving.

And it is precisely under conditions such as these — of tension and obscurity — that the Church is called upon today to bear witness to the Gospel in much of the developing world.

[23] Myrdal, pp. 64, 460.

Religion and Rationalization

In writing of the rationalization process, Max Weber frequently used Friedrich Schiller's phrase « the disenchantment of the world ».[24] The image suggests that the « spirits » are driven out of the world by the progress of science, as men discover that they can secure through rational planning and effort those goods which they had previously sought from the supernatural. And in fact, in many pre-industrial societies ritual appears as one way of coping with community and personal needs in a world of insecurity and anxiety, of dramatizing and affirming relationships and obligations within the society, hopefully of manipulating the supernatural world into support of the individual's efforts to achieve health, physical and emotional security, material prosperity.[25]

Yet frequently this is not all that there is to religion, even among very simple people. The individual's « first-order » techniques may point beyond themselves to questions and presuppositions of another order.[26]

> Thus, the utilization of astrology has an individual referent, the person whose horoscope is being set, but its use implies belief in magical dimensions of time and in notions of predestination which fit the first-order beliefs and techniques into a larger, higher-order system of signification.

This other level is mediated to the rural cultivator, to the extent that he has been affected by the culture of the wider society, through the religious specialist who represents another tradition — often derived from one of the great world religions. And the individual seems able to move easily from one level to the other according to the need of the moment, with little concern for logical consistency. The Burmese peasant, for example, attempts under some circumstances to propitiate a variety of environmental spirits or *nats* which he believes can cause illness or do him harm in other ways; he also accepts and is guided

[24] H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 51.
[25] Wolf, pp. 97-99.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

by the official Buddhist teacher's theology of *kan* or the balance of merits and demerits, to which a belief in spirits is quite alien. Thus, according to Wolf,[27]

> we can see how religion may function differently, according to the referent of the moment, and yet how it can bring these different levels of reference into relationship. The distinction between religion, as exemplified in the treatment of *nats* and religion as exemplified in the striving for *kan* is analytically useful to the anthropologist, but in the life of the peasant the two aspects of religion interact and interpenetrate.

Returning to the formulation of Max Weber, it can be predicted that in the long run, with a rising level of education and the elimination by science of many of the areas of chance and uncertainty in life, the more pragmatic functions of popular religion will decrease in significance. This could mean a purification of religion and a renewed commitment to it as the loving response of a creature to God's gracious invitation. Or it could mean the loss of all interest in religion by those who feel no further need for it: for example, a survey of religious attitudes among Japanese university students indicates that only 7.7 percent of male students and 13.0 percent of females profess any religious faith; the majority of them look on religion as essentially an emotional support for the individual, unnecessary for those with strength of character and self-confidence.[28] Finally, a rationalization of life which applies mainly to the groups already more « advanced, » further increasing the cultural, economic and religious « gaps » between them and those who have been bypassed by progress, can engender a violent reaction in the latter — in the form of an irrational mysticism, religious « protest » or « revitalization » movements, or an irreligious ideology of development and equality such as communism. In this connection, Wolf remarks as follows.[29]

> Especially in times of crisis, when communication between specialists and peasantry grows weak and the two groups come to face each other in conflict, the peasantry may produce from its concrete first-order ceremonial a simplified faith in reaction

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 102.
[28] Fernando M. Basabe, *Japanese Youth Confronts Religion* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1967), pp. 14-20, 126.
[29] Wolf, p. 106.

to the overelaborate official version. Thus, various kinds of « protestant » movements—in the wide sense of « protest »—have often taken root among peasants.

Personal Reflections

A book analyzing the collapse of democracy in the new nations, published in 1965, began with the prediction that astronauts « will reach the cold moon long before the nations of the world will lift the curse of poverty from the brow of mankind and secure human dignity as the birth-right of all human beings on earth. »[30] Almost ten years later, we can say that astronauts *have* reached the cold moon; yet there are probably more human beings suffering from grinding poverty today than there were when those lines were written. And, looking at the problems which the effort at development has spawned, we might be tempted to wish that Tabon Man had never emerged from his cave — tempted, that is, until we ask ourselves what was *his* life expectancy and how much human dignity *he* enjoyed. There seems to be more reason to regret that so much talent and treasure were devoted to putting the first man on the moon while more urgent human tasks were negleted. Yet I personally must confess that I thrilled on a Christmas Eve a few years ago as I stared up at the full moon and listened to the voices of astronauts in orbit about it, reading the first verses of Genesis to us back on earth. Those voices inspired a « Teilhardian » insight: man at the high point of technological achievement consciously referring to Him who is the Origin and Goal of the whole process. And perhaps this ambivalent reaction — a thrill at the achievement joined to regret at the priorities chosen — says something about the development process itself. Impressive as the latter may be, it takes place in a world that is blighted in many ways by selfishness, and selfishness seems to enter into the very fabric of the process. And this may give us one clue at least to the role of the Church as it presents its message — the message of the Gospel — to a society which is going through that long and difficult crisis.

[30] Maurice F. Neufeld, *Poor Countries and Authoritarian Rule* (Ithaca, N. Y.: School of Industrial and Labor Relations, 1965), p. ix.

It appears to me that, antecedent to any discussion of « strategy » in the apostolate, the Church must address its message and its attention in a special way to the poor and the marginalized, the « victims of development » who have been bypassed by progress and have no established place in the societies which are taking shape in the Third World. « The audience was the message » for Christ, at least in part: by directing His words to the outcast, by entering into table-fellowship with those whom society ignored and despised, Christ was telling His contemporaries something of Who God is — that He is the Savior of all men.[31] Should not His Church do the same?

I find an indication that it should, in the experience of a priest who spent a long period in the mountains of the Philippines, moving from one small settler's hut to another, talking with the people and discussing their problems. He once asked the people why they were so anxious that he stay with them. They answered « Because you are a proof that God is with the poor as well as the rich. It is the rich who build His churches and schools, and support the priests. But you are a sign that God loves us too. » For the same reason — that Christ's love may be revealed in deed as well as in word — it would seem that the official Church and individual Christian should be willing to devote resources to relieving the urgent material needs of the poor — and especially the poor who are « least likely to succeed » and would be passed over in despair by a development officer.[32]

Moral Leadership and Pragmatic Choices

We must recognize also that development is a conflict-laden process. Resources are always limited, and programs which advance the interests of one group will be resented by others; those which are expected to benefit all in a community frequently benefit mainly those who are already better off — and the « common good » tends to be defined by an elite in terms

[31] Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, Vol. I. The Proclamation of Jesus (London: SCM Press, 1971), pp. 114 f.

[32] See Charles Elliott, *The Development Debate* (London: SCM Press, 1971), pp. 95-100.

of its own particular interests. In the concrete a social-action promoter at the local level, for example, must decide whether he will favor community-development type projects which are based on the assumption — often erroneous — that the interests of all in the « community » are identical, or labor unions and peasant organizations which presume adversary interests and tend to generate conflict. Is economic development *or* social justice to be accorded priority when people are *both* hungry and exploited — and the hunger can most readily be relieved by enlisting the support of the elite, while overcoming the exploitation seems to require that a stand be taken against the elite? The issue may go beyond that of strategy to the very meaning of development if — as sometimes seems to be the case — the conflict approach inspires a new self-reliance and self-confidence in the poor while bringing more risks and less assured material benefits.

Nor do general moral and economic principles produce ready answers to questions on development policy. Economists disagree among themselves as to what is practical and feasible: how much distribution of income is compatible with continued economic growth, for example. Policy involves many « trade-offs » — sacrifices of one value for the sake of another. But what trade-offs are permissible? How much limitation on various freedoms is justified for the sake of political stability, or to overcome poverty so desperate that children are suffering permanent brain damage through malnutrition? Or to accelerate economic development in less disastrous circumstances? Neither the Gospel nor the Church seems to have authoritative answers to such questions, and there appear to be few absolutes.

Partly for the reason that decisions must be pragmatic and are conflict-laden, Ivan Illich believes that the Church should withdraw from development projects.[33] The difficult decisions, he believes, can best be made by men with a radically humanist and consciously secular ideology, free from the constraints of the ecclesiastical structure. The Church would then be free to celebrate the fact and the « surprise » of development. On the other hand, it has been argued that the Church *must* provide moral leadership, and not only in terms of general principles

[33] « The Powerless Church, » *Impact Magazine* (Manila), Vol. IX, No. 8 (August-September 1974), pp. 735-37.

but on the concrete level where decisions affect men's lives — but where the facts are often obscure and the best-intentioned leadership is still prone to error. In this way, it has been said, by its willingness to make mistakes in practical matters and to acknowledge them, the Church fully accepts the human condition.

Somewhat in the same vein as Illich, but more nuanced in his approach, another Ivan suggests that the Church — he is speaking of Latin America — is passing through an evolution in its relationship to civil society.[34] He sees it moving from a period of heavy involvement in social development projects to a stage in which it becomes « the spokesman for a higher moral order, emphasizing the contemporary needs and relations of men. »[35] Vallier believes that this is a healthy development from the standpoint of national integration, involving an abandonment by the Church of identification with any one sector of society in order to contribute to the development of a general moral consensus. But he does not imply that the Church's moral pronouncements are to be so general as to be totally inoffensive and ineffectual. Thus, « a bishop is increasingly expected to assume responsibility for articulating the Church's social teachings and for bringing ethical pressures to bear on patterns of injustice, poverty, and social conflict. »[36] At the same time, he sees the Church continuing its involvement in social development programs in those areas not dealt with by the government, but putting far more stress than in the past on the formation of Christian laymen — equipping them with the moral principles and dedication necessary to act in the secular order as both Christians and citizens. « At this point, the role of the clergy is essentially that of a teacher-counselor, or a pastor who aids the members of his congregation without infringing upon their individual autonomy. »[37]

On this issue I can hardly agree with Illich; there is much in the development process that I am not ready to celebrate, and I do not believe that the Church can abdicate its concern for the pragmatic choices that impinge upon human rights and

[34] Ivan Vallier, *Catholicism, Social Control, and Modernization in Latin America* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970).
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 76.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

human dignity. And I believe that I have noted a development in the Philippines somewhat similar to the one that Vallier describes, whereby priests in social action evolve from technicians and leaders into educators and counselors. I recall one priest, for example, who stayed for some forty days with members of a farmers' organization who had occupied a tract of land in order to reclaim it for a tribal group which had been dispossessed by the government. When credited with having been the leader of the occupation, the priest disclaimed that role and insisted « The farmers didn't need me as a leader or strategist; they had leaders and strategists of their own. They wanted me there as a *priest*, but a priest who understood what the issues were and what they were going through, to sit down with them when they saw that they would have to face the guns of the military, and try to throw some light from the Gospel on their situation and their choices. »

On another level, some of the bishops and the Associations of Major Religious Superiors have emerged as the only significant legal « opposition » to the Philippine government under the martial law regime — on issues such as arbitrary imprisonment, violence done to political prisoners, the suppression of press freedom and freedom of labor and peasant organizations, and aspects of the family planning program. In an authoritarian political system, this role can, of course, involve serious risks for the institutional interests of the Church; but it can also be a crucial test of its credibility when it speaks of the Gospel as a guarantee of human values.

The issues just cited seem fairly clear-cut. Yet even on these matters there can be reason for doubt — as to the facts or possible justifications for the facts or the best way of dealing with concrete instances. Which brings out the point made earlier, that we rarely if ever have authoritative judgments — based directly on the Gospel or on Church teaching — applicable to concrete situations. My impression is that the churchman need not therefore be silent; he should take a stand when this seems called for, but with a certain diffidence and a recognition that he may be wrong and that others may legitimately disagree with him.[38] The bishop might preface his remarks

[38] On the points discussed here, see Josef Fuchs, S. J., « Moral Aspects of Human Progress, » in *Theology Meets Progress*, ed. Philip Land (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1971), pp. 152-56.

on concrete social issues by saying in effect, « I have studied the facts as best I could: the concrete situation, the opinions of specialists, the goals and aspirations of this society. I have reflected on them in the light of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church. This is my considered judgment, and here are my reasons. I do not deny that others, equally well informed and sincere, may disagree. But as their bishop I ask them to reflect on my views. » This approach may seem to sacrifice some of episcopal authority, and make less likely a monolithic unity among Catholics on political and social matters. But there can be an increase in respect also for the pastor who is willing to risk a personal judgment while leaving others free to act responsibly and intelligently.[39]

Probably the most sensitive area for the Church in relating itself and its message to the problems of a developing society — at least in Asia — is that of population control. For here the Church does seem to have an authoritative position which allows of no trade-offs, and which is difficult to reconcile with an early and rapid reduction in fertility. Development planners, on the other hand, are very aware of the problem of « demographic momentum » mentioned earlier, and of the manner in which each decade's delay in « applying the brakes » increases the momentum. Their concern not to leave an insoluble problem for future generations can blind them to other values which churchmen can properly emphasize: respect for the conscience of the individual, for the procreative act which touches the very core of the human personality, the need to integrate population programs with programs for development and social justice, the probability that a « threshold » of welfare must be achieved before the poor will be motivated to limit their families, the whole question of priorities in government programs and autonomy in their dealings with the international organizations, international justice with regard to control and exploitation of resources. Possibly development planners would be more ready

[39] In the Philippines, the influence of those bishops and major superiors who have spoken out in criticism of aspects of the martial law regime is not based on the idea that they speak for the Church as a whole — for not all churchmen agree with them — but on their more personal qualities of leadership and integrity.

to discuss these issues if they did not suspect that the churchman's expressed concern about them really stemmed from an absolutist position on the contraception issue.

Development: In What Sense?

A priest who worked long and successfully in building up a chain of credit unions in the Philippines, through which many small farmers were able to recover their land which had been mortgaged to money-lenders, speaks of a discussion which he had with one of those who had gotten their land back. The priest asked him what he would do if he were to inherit a substantial amount of money. The man thought, and then replied, « Honestly, Father, I think I would buy some mortgages. » Other social action workers tell similar stories, all leading to the conclusion that neither economic development nor social justice of themselves make people better men or better Christians. As a result of this awareness, the priest mentioned above resolved never again to begin building a credit union until he was convinced that — through discussion groups and a meaningful liturgy — a Christian community was coming into being. Others have adopted similar approaches, sometimes continuing the discussion phase for many months before turning to concrete programs of action, or engaging in continuous reflection together with action, in the hope that thereby an impact would be had at the deeper level of cultural and personal values.

One priest and professor of philosophy has been living for two or three years in a small and very isolated Philippine barrio — attempting to understand in depth the people, their thoughtways, and their religious responses.[40] Reflecting on the various « models » of the relationship between religion and life, he finds immediately that the « Existential » or secular humanist model has no relevance in a world in which God — and the spirits — are very much alive. A « Sacration » model based on the intuitions of Teilhard, presenting God as not dead but coming alive, « that is, becoming eucharistically present in history » and in the evolution of the cosmos, has a special attraction for the priest. But it is not very meaningful for the people; technology's promises are still too ambiguous to inspire much optimism or enthusiasm in them. A « Radical-Christian-Secularist » model focused on liberation from oppression has a greater attraction for this community which supported the communist rebellion of the 1950's. But they resonate even more deeply, the priest suspects, to the « Signals of Transcendence » model which « emphasizes phenomena found in, but pointing beyond, nature: propensities for creating order, for play, for hope, for revulsion against evil, for laughter, for fantasy, for festivity, for celebration. » The author goes on to wonder why his own Mass is not more meaningful to these people who find deep meaning in the annual passion play, in funerals, even in self-flagellation during Holy Week — experiences closely related somehow to individual and social needs while the official liturgy seems alien and alienating to them.

[40] Vicente Marasigan, S.J., « From Academe to Nipa Huts, » *Impact Magazine* (Manila), Vol. IX, No. 8 (August-September 1974), pp. 722-725.

The Church, then, must discover — and perhaps discover anew in each society and community — how, while remaining true to itself, it can adapt its message and its ritual to the cultural level of each group without impeding its progress to a higher level, integrate the individual through symbol and ritual with a meaningful community without closing him off from other communities, allay strain and anxiety without recourse to magic, guide man in his relationships with his fellow men and encourage a religious experience which is mature and integrating to his personality. Somehow it must reach the families and small groups in which personalities are formed and mature. Clearly, all of this calls for great creativity on the part of individuals and flexibility on the part of institutions. And these may appear first of all in the willingness to learn *from* the people before going on to teach them, to find out how God has been speaking to them before beginning to speak ourselves in the name of God. And perhaps in this is found the most important reflection of all, for the individual and for the institution which set out to evangelize a people: that, « unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. » For somehow, in the process of development, all must die and be born again: the developed nations and the developing ones, the peoples being evangelized and the evangelizers. Those who are unwilling to enter into the process and accept the risks of change, will have little to contribute.

Pourquoi l'Église a besoin d'Universités

HERVÉ CARRIER, S. J.

SOMMAIRE: 1. La culture de la société post-industrielle. - 2. L'apport original des Universités catholiques. - 3. Consensus des éducateurs catholiques. - 4. Besoins nouveaux, responsabilités nouvelles: - A. L'Enseignement: mutations socio-pédagogiques; - B. La Recherche: nouveau service de la collectivité. - 5. Conclusion.

1. LA CULTURE DE LA SOCIÉTÉ POST-INDUSTRIELLE

Le sentiment se répand aujourd'hui que nous arrivons à un tournant décisif de la culture; et il nous semble que les chrétiens devraient être les premiers à se sentir interpellés par l'événement [1]. Périodiquement au cours de son histoire, l'Eglise a eu à franchir des périodes plus ou moins longues d'effervescence intellectuelle et, chaque fois, elle a dû entrer en dialogue avec un monde naissant pour lui enseigner le message permanent de l'évangile. C'est ce qu'elle a cherché à faire avec les platoniciens, avec les penseurs arabes, avec les philosophes néo-aristotéliciens, avec les lettrés de la renaissance. Aujourd'hui les catholiques sont immergés dans la culture scientifique qui tend à dominer notre époque. Ce qui est leur demandé c'est d'abord de discerner les traits de cette culture en gestation et de découvrir les voies originales qui permettront à l'évangile de féconder encore une fois la pensée. La tâche apparaît presque surhumaine car elle défie, semble-t-il, toute concertation préalable. Mais la complexité de l'entreprise ne saurait dispenser les chrétiens de tout

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[1] Cet essai reprend en les développant des thèmes que nous exposions, à New Orleans en avril 1973, devant l'assemblée des Présidents des Universités et *Colleges* catholiques aux U.S.A.

mettre en oeuvre pour chercher à répondre à une exigence certaine; il s'agit en somme de rendre vraiment opérante la mission évangélisatrice de l'Eglise en cette époque. Parmi les moyens qui s'offrent à l'Eglise, l'un des plus indiqués nous semble être la présence des catholiques au sein du monde universitaire. Grâce surtout à la collaboration des Universités catholiques, l'Eglise dispose en effet de lieux privilégiés où le dialogue entre l'évangile et la culture moderne peut être poursuivi de façon efficace.

Des tendances récentes devraient amener les catholiques à examiner encore plus attentivement le rôle que peuvent jouer dans ce contexte, plus de 600 institutions d'enseignement supérieur dans l'Eglise, dont au moins 200 sont des Universités au sens plein du mot. D'une part, il y a le fait que l'Université comme telle a acquis une position centrale dans notre société scientifique; et par ailleurs on constate chez les universitaires catholiques une persuasion nouvelle quant à leur mission dans l'Eglise et le monde actuel. Ces deux tendances évidemment ne sont pas sans liens étroits entre elles.

Rôle central de l'Université: Les sociologues qui ont étudié les caractéristiques de la société post-industrielle, dans laquelle nous sommes entrés, ont noté le rôle déterminant que jouent aujourd'hui l'innovation et la créativité basées sur la recherche scientifique. Le savoir est en train de devenir le pouvoir dominant de la société. Daniel Bell a écrit en ce sens: « Ce qui est maintenant devenu décisif pour la société, c'est le rôle central du savoir théorique, c'est le primat de la théorie sur l'empirisme, ainsi que la codification des connaissances en systèmes abstraits de symboles qui peuvent être reproduits en plusieurs circonstances différentes. Chaque société maintenant vit par l'innovation et le développement et c'est le savoir théorique qui est la matrice de l'innovation ». Cette nouvelle situation de la science explique pourquoi l'Université occupe une place de plus en plus importante dans la société post-industrielle. Au cours des cent dernières années, explique Daniel Bell, ce sont les entreprises économiques qui étaient les institutions-clés de la société. Aujourd'hui les exigences de la planification et de l'innovation ont donné une telle importance à la recherche scientifique que l'Université émerge comme l'institution centrale de notre époque:

« L'Université — ou une autre forme d'institut scientifique — deviendra l'institution centrale des cent prochaines années, à cause du rôle qu'elle joue comme nouvelle source d'innovation et de connaissance » [2].

Remarquons que, même dans les pays en voie de développement, la science et la technique sont appelées à jouer un rôle toujours plus grand dans la croissance des sociétés. Une étude récente des Nations Unies le reconnaissait clairement en affirmant que: « c'est la science qui offre les meilleures possibilités d'aider les pays en voie de développement à accélerer le processus de leur développement global ». Et un appel est fait aux pays riches pour qu'ils facilitent le transfert des connaissances et des équipements scientifiques vers les pays émergents [3]. Le développement des Universités dans les pays du Tiers-Monde constitue un objectif prioritaire; et la création de l'Université des Nations Unies décidée récemment a pour but, entre autre, de promouvoir l'enseignement supérieur dans les pays en voie de développement [4].

2. L'apport original des Universités catholiques

C'est précisement lorsque l'Université est en train d'acquérir un poids encore plus grand dans les sociétés modernes, que l'on discerne chez les universitaires catholiques une prise de conscience plus aiguë de leur rôle dans l'Eglise et le monde. Plus que par le passé peut-être, ils sont convaincus que l'Université catholique a un rôle indispensable à jouer dans l'Eglise pour que celle-ci soit efficacement présente à notre époque.

Les difficultés: A première vue on pourrait douter que cette conviction collective soit aussi ferme, car les motifs sur lesquels

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[2] Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society. A Venture in Social Forecasting*. New York, Basic Books Inc. 1973, pp. 343-344; — voir aussi H. Carrier, *L'Université entre l'engagement et la liberté*. Rome, Presses de l'Université Grégorienne 1972, ch. II: « L'Université dans la société post-industrielle ».

[3] *Plan d'Action mondial pour l'application de la science et de la technique au développement*. New York, Nations Unies 1973, p. 53.

[4] Jagbans K. Balbir, « L'Université des Nations Unies ». *Chronique de l'Unesco*, vol. XX (1974) n. 4, pp. 147-152.

elle s'appuie ne sont pas évidents à tous. Certains, par exemple, font valoir que l'Eglise, en diverses époques de son histoire et en divers pays, a su survivre sans Universités catholiques. En fait, il n'y a pas eu d'Universités catholiques à proprement parler avant le Moyen Age, même s'il faut admettre que, depuis ses origines, l'Eglise a toujours senti la nécessité de favoriser la recherche, l'étude et l'enseignement dans l'exercice de sa mission. Il est vrai aussi que, de nos jours, il y a de vastes régions du monde où n'existent pratiquement pas d'Universités catholiques: en Allemagne, en Angleterre, en Australie, en Afrique. Mais en y regardant de plus près, on voit que, même dans ces pays, l'Eglise n'est pas dépourvue de facultés, d'instituts ou de collèges post-secondaire qui lui permettent d'accomplir son oeuvre intellectuelle. D'autres doutes sont parfois formulés à l'égard des Universités catholiques, lorsqu'on affirme par exemple que la pastorale universitaire de l'Eglise devrait se concentrer sur les Universités non-catholiques, étant donné que la grande majorité des étudiants catholiques se trouvent dans ces institutions et qu'une minorité seulement fréquente les Universités catholiques. Mais cette vue statistique ne présente qu'une vue très partiale des choses, car le problème n'est pas d'abord quantitatif; c'est d'attitude qu'il s'agit. La question est de comprendre le rôle spécifique et irremplaçable qu'une Université catholique peut jouer dans la culture moderne.

Raisons d'une conviction: Or nous voyons que malgré toutes les difficultés rencontrées par les Universités catholiques, une conviction nouvelle s'affirme aujourd'hui chez leurs responsables à l'effet que ces institutions ont, plus que jamais, un service indispensable à rendre à l'Eglise.

Sur quoi repose cette conviction que l'Eglise a un besoin vital d'Universités catholiques? Deux raisons ou plutôt deux faits majeurs se présentent à l'esprit lorsqu'on s'interroge sur le pourquoi des Universités catholiques de nos jours.

Le premier fait c'est précisément le consensus profond qui est en train de s'affermir dans les Universités catholiques du monde entier, à la suite d'une recherche collective, qui dure depuis plusieurs années déjà et dont on constate maintenant les résultats concrets. Le signe le plus éloquent de ce consensus moral c'est le rapport du dernier congrès des Universités catholiques tenu à Rome en novembre 1972.

Le deuxième fait on le trouve dans l'émergence de besoins nouveaux qui constituent pour les éducateurs catholiques une sorte de défi, car on y perçoit de nouvelles formes de service que l'Université catholique peut rendre à notre temps.

Considérons plus en détail ces deux faits: 1) l'émergence d'un consensus renouvelé chez les éducateurs concernant le rôle de l'enseignement supérieur dans l'Eglise. 2) La découverte de nouveaux besoins dans le monde universitaire en évolution et l'apparition de nouvelles responsabilités pour les Universités catholiques.

3. Consensus des éducateurs catholiques

Nous parlons ici d'un consensus en train de prendre forme entre les responsables des Universités catholiques du monde entier, nous ne parlons pas d'unanimité absolue; ce que personne, je crois, ne prétendrait obtenir dans un domaine aussi complexe.

L'émergence de cette conviction collective constitue, à notre avis, l'événement le plus important survenu dans le monde de l'enseignement supérieur catholique ces dernières années.

Les recherches communes sur l'Université: Depuis le Concile, peu d'institutions, à l'égal des Universités catholiques, ont entrepris une réforme aussi profonde de leurs structures, un examen aussi sincère de leurs objectifs, une révision aussi attentive de leurs liens avec la communauté ecclésiale et civile. L'ampleur des recherches que les Universités catholiques ont entreprises sur elles-mêmes est assurément un signe de vitalité remarquable. S'il faut reconnaître les hésitations, les doutes, les angoisses mêmes qui ont parfois accompagné ces recherches, on ne peut qu'admirer la somme d'énergie, de temps, et d'argent que les Universités ont généreusement consacrée à cet examen loyal de leurs responsabilités dans l'Eglise et dans le monde moderne. Les principales étapes de cette recherche sont connues. Pour les évoquer, il suffit de rappeler le nombre impressionnant de rencontres régionales, nationales et internationales qui ont marqué

le progrès de la réflexion commune entre les Universités catholiques. Mentionnons surtout les rencontres suivantes: Tokyo 1965, Land O'Lakes 1967, Paris 1967, Kinshasa 1968, Rome 1969, Boston 1970; et en 1971: Paris, Grottaferrata, Kyoto, Caracas, Land O'Lakes, puis en 1972: Grottaferrata et Rome; en 1973: Salamanque; en 1974: Grottaferrata; en 1975, ce sera New Delhi.

Depuis 1968 surtout, un dialogue très franc et très libre s'est développé entre les Universités catholiques et la Congrégation pour l'Education Catholique. Plusieurs rencontres ont permis d'approfondir les points de vue respectifs des universitaires et des pasteurs.

En toutes ces rencontres et discussions, les questions les plus fondamentales furent abordées avec courage; on se demanda entre autre: Comment les Universités catholiques se relient au Christ et à son évangile. Comment elles se situent par rapport à l'Eglise. Comment elles doivent servir ce monde moderne assoiffé de vérité, de justice, de progrès humain et spirituel.

Il est évidemment difficile d'apporter des réponses définitives à des questions aussi complexes; mais nous entrevoyons déjà quelles seront les orientations de l'avenir. Le document du congrès de Rome de novembre 1972 incorpore et synthétise en quelque sorte toutes les recherches de ces dernières années sur la mission de l'Université catholique dans le monde moderne. Une présentation des résultats obtenus à ce congrès sera utile à notre propos.

La déclaration collective de 1972[5]: Le Congrès de novembre 1972 constitue un événement majeur pour les Universités catholiques. La réunion entendait reprendre le travail commencé en 1968, à l'invitation de la Congrégation pour l'Education Catholique. Pour faire aboutir les travaux, qui avaient été interrompus, la Congrégation demanda à la F.I.U.C. d'organiser des réunions régionales entre Universités catholiques, en vue de convoquer un congrès international à Rome en novembre 1972. La base des rencontres régionales serait un texte de 1969 resté inachevé. Au cours de l'année 1971, la F.I.U.C. organisa des réunions régionales à Paris, Grottaferrata, Kyoto, Caracas, Land O'Lakes.

[5] *L'Université Catholique dans le Monde Moderne.* (Congrès des délégués des Universités catholiques. Rome, 20-29 novembre 1972). Paris, Fédération Internationale des Universités Catholiques, 1973.

Une dernière réunion eut lieu à Grottaferrata où l'on fit la synthèse des résultats obtenus; et le document de travail préparé à cette occasion fut envoyé aux 40 représentants élus qui devaient participer au congrès de novembre 1972 à Rome. Ce congrès dura plus d'une semaine et permit de mettre au point une déclaration très substantielle dans laquelle les Universités catholiques prenaient position sur quatre points majeurs: 1) la nature de l'Université catholique; 2) le gouvernement de l'Université; 3) les activités de l'Université catholique; 4) les relations de l'Université catholique, notamment avec la hiérarchie de l'Eglise. Si le document est susceptible d'amélioration ultérieure, on peut considérer qu'il marque un progrès décisif pour les Universités catholiques[6]. C'est sans doute la question des rapports entre l'évangile et la culture moderne qui a été le mieux traitée. Retenons en particulier les points suivants en nous inspirant du document:

a) *Intégration du savoir et Evangile*: L'Université catholique doit avant tout poursuivre la confrontation du savoir humain et du message chrétien, afin d'apporter à la science moderne l'éclairage de l'évangile. « L'Université étant de par sa nature même le lieu de rencontre des différentes branches du savoir humain, dans un effort de confrontation et d'enrichissement mutuel, l'Université catholique apportera à cette tâche de synthèse et d'intégration, la lumière du message chrétien ».

b) *Dialogue entre théologie et science*: L'Université catholique est dans une position unique pour promouvoir le dialogue vivant entre la théologie et les sciences modernes. Le savoir humain comme la théologie elle-même en bénéficieront. « Par suite une des tâches principales de l'Université catholique, qu'elle est seule à pouvoir accomplir de façon adéquate, sera de rendre la réflexion théologique significative pour l'ensemble du savoir humain et réciproquement de rendre cet ensemble significatif pour la théologie elle-même ».

[6] Le 23 avril 1973, la Congrégation adressa aux recteurs des Universités catholiques une lettre dans laquelle elle reconnaît la valeur du travail accompli et formule quelques points qui devraient être plus explicitement développés, notamment en ce qui touche à l'auto-régulation de l'Université et à ses relations avec l'autorité ecclésiastique.

c) *Fonction de témoignage dans la culture*: De par son existence même, l'Université catholique a une fonction de témoignage dans le monde académique et scientifique. « Par sa recherche et son enseignement l'Université catholique est appelée à être témoin du Christ ». Par son travail propre, « elle rend un témoignage éloquent à la valeur de vie et de vérité de l'évangile ».

d) *Au service des responsables dans l'Eglise et la société*: Dans sa volonté de servir, l'Université catholique tâche de mettre les découvertes de la science « à la disposition du peuple de Dieu spécialement de ceux qui assument dans l'Eglise ou la société civile la responsabilité des décisions importantes ».

e) *Réponse interdisciplinaire aux problèmes urgents*: L'Université catholique doit éviter tout isolement et s'attacher à comprendre, dans une approche interdisciplinaire, les problèmes les plus urgents de notre époque. « L'Université catholique se doit de participer avec son inspiration propre à cet effort de recherche où les différentes disciplines peuvent se rencontrer apportant chacune sa contribution à la solution des questions complexes que le monde réel nous pose ».

f) *Dialogue oecuménique et inter-culturel*: Le dialogue doit être poursuivi avec les autres religions et avec les courants culturels non chrétiens. Ainsi « l'Université catholique pourra contribuer efficacement à promouvoir un véritable oecuménisme et à engager un dialogue fructueux avec les religions non-chrétiennes et avec les non-croyants ».

g) *Engagement dans les tâches du développement*: Une importance spéciale est accordée au développement et à la justice sociale, à promouvoir par les moyens propres de l'Université. « Le rôle des Universités dans l'avenir dépendra en grande partie de la réponse qui sera donnée à cette question cruciale: quelle sera la contribution des institutions d'enseignement supérieur aux tâches urgentes du développement dans ce monde moderne où la misère domine encore ».

On comprend qu'un tel programme engage profondément le sort futur des Universités catholiques et que sa réalisation peut être déterminante pour le dialogue que l'Eglise entend poursuivre

avec la culture moderne. Voilà, croyons-nous, les raisons les plus profondes qui permettent d'affirmer le rôle irremplaçable des Universités catholiques aujourd'hui. Si on voulait résumer ces raisons en quelques formules brèves, on ne trouverait pas mieux, pensons-nous, que les quatre propositions présentées au début de la déclaration de 1972, comme les notes essentielles de l'Université catholique:

« 1. Une inspiration chrétienne, non seulement individuelle mais communautaire.

2. Un effort continu de réflexion à la lumière de la foi catholique sur les acquisitions incessantes du savoir humain, auxquelles elle s'efforce de contribuer par ses propres recherches.

3. La fidélité au message du Christ tel qu'il est transmis par l'Eglise.

4. Un engagement institutionnel au service du peuple de Dieu et de la famille humaine en marche vers la fin transcendante qui donne un sens à la vie ».

Si tels sont l'idéal et la vocation de l'Université catholique, qui douterait qu'elle ne soit une institution nécessaire pour que l'Eglise puisse remplir en plénitude sa mission de porter le Christ à la culture moderne? L'Université catholique représente un secteur vital pour l'Eglise, comme n'a pas hésité à l'affirmer le S. Père aux représentants de la Fédération Internationale des Universités Catholiques en 1971: « Qui oserait dire, même si les conditions entre pays s'avèrent fort diverses, que cette oeuvre a perdu de sa valeur, de son urgence? Vous en avez conscience, il y va de l'intérêt de toute l'Eglise: aussi est-ce un souci primordial de ses pasteurs responsables » [7].

4. Besoins nouveaux, responsabilités nouvelles

Les raisons que nous avons discutées jusqu'ici touchent aux principes ou aux motivations doctrinales qui justifient, croyons-nous, le rôle indispensable des Universités catholiques dans l'Eglise.

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[7] Voir, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 7 mai 1971.

c) *Fonction de témoignage dans la culture*: De par son existence même, l'Université catholique a une fonction de témoignage dans le monde académique et scientifique. « Par sa recherche et son enseignement l'Université catholique est appelée à être témoin du Christ ». Par son travail propre, « elle rend un témoignage éloquent à la valeur de vie et de vérité de l'évangile ».

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Nous voudrions maintenant nous arrêter à des raisons qui sont davantage liées à l'évolution concrète des faits et qui nous suggèrent, par un autre biais, la nécessité de l'Université catholique dans ce monde qu'on appelle post-industriel.

Si nous observons les évolutions socio-pédagogiques de l'enseignement supérieur, deux tendances majeures devraient retenir l'attention des éducateurs et les amener à redéfinir leurs responsabilités dans la société ecclésiale et civile. De profondes mutations sont en train de se produire dans nos sociétés et on découvre plus clairement maintenant leurs répercussions sur l'Université et plus précisément sur ses deux fonctions traditionnelles: l'*enseignement* et la *recherche*. En analysant brièvement ces évolutions socio-culturelles, nous chercherons à mieux comprendre les services nouveaux que l'Université catholique est appelée à rendre aujourd'hui et demain.

A. *L'Enseignement: mutations socio-pédagogiques*

L'observation sociologique nous fournit un argument ultérieur pour affirmer la nécessité des Universités catholiques à notre époque. L'Université traditionnelle, comme on l'a connue, subit actuellement des métamorphoses telles que ses activités d'enseignement en sont transformées.

L'Université était conçue jusqu'ici comme une communauté d'enseignants et d'étudiants, réunis en un espace défini, engagés dans des rapports personnalisés et directs, et utilisant l'imprimé comme moyen de conservation du savoir. Maintenant, cette institution traditionnelle — qui correspond encore à la majorité de nos Universités — est déjà concurrencée par de nouveaux modes d'enseignement et de diffusion des connaissances. Ces changements sont dûs en grande partie aux modifications pédagogiques provoquées par les nouveaux moyens de communication et par la technologie de l'enseignement.

Or, nous croyons que dans cette époque de mutation des systèmes d'enseignement, les éducateurs catholiques ont un rôle spécifique à remplir pour que l'Eglise soit présente au nouveau monde universitaire en gestation. Rappelons quelques faits, déjà connus sans doute, mais qui méritent toute l'attention des éducateurs catholiques.

Les nouvelles formes de l'Université: Pensons, par exemple, à l'étonnante expérience de l'*Open University* en Angleterre, créée en 1971 et qui jouit du plein statut d'université dans l'Association Internationale des Universités. Cette Université, qui dispense son enseignement à plus de 40.000 étudiants âgés de 21 ans ou plus, procède par le moyen de la télévision, de la radio, des cours par correspondance et par des sessions d'été d'une semaine tenues à l'une des Universités locales. L'Université, en quelque sorte, s'est diluée dans le tissu même de la nation et, par capillarité, elle est rendue présente virtuellement à chaque foyer. L'expérience a déjà attiré l'attention des éducateurs du monde entier et plusieurs pays songent à reprendre cette formule universitaire, en particulier les Etats-Unis et le Canada.

Une expérience analogue est celle de la *University of the Air* au Japon. Le projet était à l'étude depuis 1969 et fut mis à exécution en 1971 par le gouvernement japonais. L'Université procède également par la radio, la télévision et par les services de tuteurs; elle offre un programme minimum de 4 ans comprenant au moins 124 crédits.

Des formules universitaires de même type, quoique moins élaborées, sont en application en Suède, en Allemagne, aux Pays-Bas, en Espagne, en France, au Canada. Le Conseil de l'Europe a décidé la création de l'Institut Interuniversitaire européen pour l'enseignement à distance; et des recherches actives se poursuivent sur toutes les formes modernes des « enseignements multi-media » appelés aussi « télé-enseignements ». L'utilisation des video-cassettes laisse prévoir que l'enseignement, qui était autrefois donné à l'intérieur des murs de nos institutions, sera de plus en plus diffusé par delà l'enceinte de l'Université traditionnelle.

On pourrait mentionner aussi d'autres développements comme celui de la *University Without Walls*; il s'agit d'une expérience promue aux Etats-Unis par 25 Collèges et Universités, qui poursuivent leurs activités éducatives en utilisant divers bureaux et locaux dans la ville, aux heures libres, et qui recourent aux services non seulement de professeurs attitrés, mais font appel aussi à toutes les ressources humaines disponibles dans la communauté locale: médecins, professionnels, hommes d'affaires, artistes, pasteurs, écrivains etc. [8].

[8] *University Without Walls: A First Report. Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities.* Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387, 1972.

Au delà de ces expériences on parle maintenant de télévision éducative par satellite. L'Unesco a annoncé récemment le lancement du satellite ATS-6 effectué par la Nasa; et elle affirme que ce nouveau moyen de communication pourrait révolutionner le monde de l'éducation. Le gouvernement indien, avec le concours d'experts de l'Unesco, utilisera ce satellite pour instaurer un programme de télévision éducative qui rejoindra environ 5.000 villages. L'expérience pourrait être étendue à l'enseignement secondaire et même post-secondaire. Si cette initiative est couronnée de succès elle sera imitée par d'autres pays. L'Unesco étudie présentement la possibilité d'utiliser des satellites à fins éducatives en Afrique, au Pakistan et dans les pays arabes; et elle poursuit une étude approfondie en vue d'introduire un système régional de télévision en 9 pays d'Amérique Latine [9]. En Europe on envisage aussi l'utilisation d'un satellite d'intercommunication qui serait au service de l'Institut Interuniversitaire européen pour l'enseignement à distance.

Ces développements nous montrent que l'activité universitaire a déjà franchi les murs de nos institutions; et ces évolutions constituent pour tout responsable d'Université, un sérieux sujet de réflexion sur l'avenir de l'enseignement supérieur, ses formes institutionnelles et ses méthodes. L'Eglise sera-t-elle présente aux nouveaux types d'enseignement qui prennent forme sous nos yeux? Pour que la réponse soit affirmative, les universitaires catholiques devront faire preuve d'imagination et de grande compétence.

La technologie éducative: Mais nous croyons que les transformations qui s'annoncent à l'intérieur même de nos murs méritent une considération encore plus attentive. Nous pensons surtout au développement des techniques éducatives qui s'implantent à un rythme très rapide en Amérique et en Europe. Diverses études en soulignent l'importance: par exemple une publication spéciale du Conseil de l'Europe [10] et un rapport de la Carnegie Commission on Higher Education [11] sont consacrés précisement au problème de la technologie de l'éducation et à sa signification pour l'avenir de l'enseignement supérieur.

La Carnegie Commission considère ce phénomène comme la Quatrième Révolution dans l'histoire de l'éducation. La première révolution se produisit lorsqu'apparut dans la société le professeur, auquel les familles confiaient leurs enfants; la deuxième révolution coïncide avec l'adoption de l'écriture en plus de l'expression orale; la troisième correspond à l'invention de l'imprimerie; la quatrième révolution est déterminée par l'utilisation de l'électronique, c'est-à-dire de la télévision, de la radio et de l'ordinateur à l'école. On connaît les principales techniques utilisées: la télévision par cable, les video-cassettes, les cours programmés par ordinateurs, les équipements audio-visuels, la miniaturisation du matériel de bibliothèque.

On comprendra l'importance de ces évolutions, en pensant à la recommandation de la Commission Carnegie à l'effet que le gouvernement fédéral américain devrait dépenser dans le proche avenir 100 millions de dollars par an pour développer la technologie de l'éducation; et qu'il devrait par la suite investir une somme égale à 1 % de toutes les dépenses nationales pour l'éducation supérieure. On prévoit que les nouvelles techniques seront très largement introduites dans les bibliothèques d'ici 7 ou 8 ans, et dans l'enseignement lui-même dans une quinzaine d'années. Certains spécialistes, en Allemagne et en Suède notamment, prédisent que d'ici une dizaine d'années l'enseignement à distance remplacera l'enseignement supérieur actuel. Même ceux qui estiment ces prédictions exagérées ne peuvent cependant rester indifférents aux mutations qui s'annoncent.

Sans nous attarder davantage à ces aspects descriptifs, nous pouvons déjà en tirer quelques réflexions pédagogiques qui confirment, à nos yeux, les services originaux que les éducateurs catholiques sont appelés à rendre dans ce contexte nouveau.

La technologie éducative obligera les Universités catholiques à repenser leurs manières de faire et leurs méthodes pédagogi-

[9] *Le Mois à l'Unesco*, (Paris), n. 73 (avril-juillet 1974), p. 34. Le sigle ATS est l'abréviation pour « Application Technology Satellite ». — Pour les projets et les réalisations en Europe on consultera le rapport de Robert Lefranc, *Enseignement Supérieur — Utilisation des systèmes d'enseignement à distance*. Strasbourg, Conseil de l'Europe, 1974 (147 pp. offset).

[10] *Education et Culture*. Revue du Conseil de la Coopération Culturelle du Conseil de l'Europe et de la Fondation Européenne de la Culture, n. 20, Strasbourg, 1972

[11] *The Fourth Revolution: Instructional Technology in Higher Education*. A Report and Recommendations by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. New York, Mc Graw-Hill, June 1972.

ques. D'une part, la *communitas docentium* sera beaucoup plus mobile et disloquée qu'autrefois; la *communitas studentium* sera également dispersée et la relation traditionnelle maître-étudiant sera en partie relayée par une relation plus impersonnelle entre le moyen technique de communication et l'étudiant. La tendance en pédagogie sera d'insister sur l'apprentissage (learning) plus que sur l'enseignement (teaching). Le rôle de la bibliothèque se transformera et acquerra une importance encore plus grande dans l'Université de demain; car elle sera considérée comme une banque du savoir accumulé, enregistré, et disponible sur simple demande par ordinateur. Le cumul de l'information deviendra tel qu'il sera toujours plus difficile à une personne cultivée et spécialisée de suivre le progrès des publications dans sa propre discipline.

On discerne déjà diverses lignes d'orientation que les éducateurs catholiques devraient considérer en vue d'une action conjointe. Les suggestions suivantes nous viennent à l'esprit.

a) Il faudrait, par exemple, que l'on étudie ce que signifiera la dépersonnalisation de l'enseignement provoquée par la technologie scolaire. On devrait se demander comment les Universités de l'avenir pourront compenser cet effet de dépersonnalisation par un autre type d'assistance aux étudiants, de consultation, de tutorship. Nous ne pouvons ici que soulever ces questions; mais elles sont lourdes de conséquences.

b) L'élément décisif dans ces évolutions pédagogiques ne saurait être la technique, le *hardware*. Ce sera, au contraire, le *software*, c'est-à-dire l'esprit d'innovation pour créer des programmes originaux, et pour inspirer les enseignements qui seront enregistrés ou stockés électroniquement. Les catholiques, certainement, ont un rôle propre à jouer dans ce domaine, au nom même de leur philosophie de l'éducation. Il faudra pour y réussir beaucoup d'imagination, d'intelligence et de créativité.

c) L'introduction de la technologie éducative se fait en général au nom d'une démocratisation de l'enseignement et d'une diffusion plus large de l'éducation permanente. Il ne faudrait pas que nos institutions catholiques, qui restent une minorité, s'opposent au mouvement; au contraire, il faudrait que les catholiques comprennent l'importance des changements en cours, les encouragent avec intelligence, avec un esprit critique et créateur. Les Universités catholiques doivent être présentes efficacement au nouveau système universitaire qui s'élabore.

En un mot, nous sommes à un carrefour de l'histoire des Universités [12]. D'une part, elles ont perdu de leur prestige et de leur crédit dans une partie de l'opinion publique, hypersensibilisée par les révoltes des étudiants, et les conflits internes de l'Université. D'autre part, les nations et les collectivités sont appelées à dépenser des sommes toujours plus considérables pour l'éducation supérieure. Les éducateurs catholiques ont ici une responsabilité particulière auprès de l'opinion publique, pour l'éclairer sur le sens véritable de l'enseignement supérieur et sur les critères humains et spirituels qui justifient les sacrifices requis pour le développement de l'Université de demain.

L'enjeu, finalement, c'est une jeunesse nouvelle qu'il faut accueillir, comprendre et introduire à la science et à la sagesse. Les moyens et les méthodes de l'Université peuvent changer, mais la finalité humaniste et spirituelle de l'éducation restera un objectif essentiel et permanent. Jamais peut-être dans l'histoire, la tâche de l'éducation n'a été aussi ardue et délicate; car jamais les mutations socio-culturelles n'ont créé d'aussi profonds écarts entre les générations.

En raison même de ces difficultés, nous croyons trouver des raisons décisives pour souligner le rôle capital de l'enseignement supérieur dans l'Eglise. La difficulté de certaines tâches est souvent un critère de leur importance et devrait constituer une motivation supplémentaire pour les entreprendre. Les choix que les Universités et les responsables dans l'Eglise feront aujourd'hui pèseront de tout leur poids sur l'avenir.

Il faudrait qu'au sein de l'Université et de l'Eglise surgissent encore des penseurs comme John Henry Newman, pour nous aider à promouvoir effectivement l'idée d'une Université catholique pour notre temps. Si cette tâche déborde maintenant les capacités d'une seule personne, espérons du moins que la responsabilité sera assumée collectivement par l'élite des édu-

[12] Voir l'ouvrage suivant qui a bien analysé les mutations structurelles et les innovations de la technologie éducative au sein de l'Université moderne: G. Deurinck (sous la direction de), *L'Université de demain*, Paris-Bruxelles, Elvésier Sequoia, 1974.

cateurs catholiques, qui ont foi dans l'Université et dans sa mission irremplaçable.

B. *La Recherche: nouveau service de la collectivité*

Recherche et progrès social: Non seulement dans le domaine de l'enseignement, mais dans celui de la recherche, les Universités catholiques auront une mission originale à remplir dans l'Eglise. L'Université aujourd'hui est invitée à de profonds rajustements dans sa manière de servir la collectivité par la recherche. Comme nous le rappelions plus haut, la recherche scientifique, et plus précisement la recherche organisée, est devenue l'un des facteurs décisifs du progrès social et du développement. L'innovation scientifique constitue l'élément moteur de la société post-industrielle. Les organisations modernes qui désirent survivre et prospérer sont appelées à planifier leurs activités, à prévoir l'avenir, à assurer leur créativité continue; or ceci suppose un recours constant à la recherche et à l'étude spécialisée. C'est ce qui se passe dans l'industrie, dans les administrations, dans les nations elles-mêmes. Tous les pays modernes ont compris que leur progrès, leur sécurité et leur bien-être sont liés au développement de la recherche scientifique. De nos jours, gouverner un pays signifie, pour une large part, savoir mettre la science au service du bien commun. Il y a dix ans encore, la recherche scientifique était concentrée principalement dans les secteurs de la défense militaire, des transports, des communications, de la technologie industrielle. Plus récemment, les pays ont découvert la nécessité de la recherche dans les sciences sociales, les humanités, en histoire, en droit, etc. La promotion des sciences de l'homme permet de répondre aux besoins nouveaux qui sont liés à l'urbanisation, à la protection de l'environnement, à l'extension de l'éducation, à la qualité de la vie des citoyens.

C'est dans ce sens qu'on parle d'une politique de la recherche dans les pays modernes. Il s'agit de l'effort concerté d'une nation, pour promouvoir la recherche dans les secteurs jugés les plus importants pour le bien commun. Cet effort appelle une programmation de la recherche; et celle-ci est généralement mise en oeuvre par un ministère spécial ou un organisme gouvernemental chargé spécifiquement de coordonner les activités de recherches dans la nation.

L'Eglise, évidemment, ne peut rester étrangère à ces évolutions à la fois scientifiques, culturelles et sociales. Dans la mesure où l'Eglise désire rencontrer le monde moderne pour y porter le message du Christ, elle doit elle-même se mettre en état de recherche pour découvrir, à la lumière de l'évangile, des réponses originales aux problèmes nouveaux de ce temps. La question qui se pose dès lors et qui intéresse directement les Universités catholiques est celle-ci: Comment une politique de la recherche dans l'Eglise est-elle possible et quelle contribution peuvent y apporter les Universités catholiques?

Comme toute collectivité moderne, l'Eglise doit bénéficier des avantages de la recherche pour mieux répondre à sa mission et orienter son action dans la société actuelle. Que de problèmes nouveaux se posent à l'Eglise et qui exigent un effort concerté des chercheurs. Pensons aux questions oecuméniques, aux problèmes du développement, de la démographie, aux questions soulevées par les nouvelles expériences de collegialité, de vie communautaire, aux nouvelles formes d'exercice de l'autorité. Songeons à la collaboration scientifique qui sera nécessaire pour promouvoir les indispensables recherches entre théologiens, exégètes, historiens, spécialistes des sciences humaines, afin d'approfondir le message du Christ et sa signification pour la culture actuelle. Un vaste effort de recherche au niveau interdisciplinaire et international sera nécessaire pour que l'Eglise puisse prolonger son dialogue avec les courants intellectuels de notre époque, avec la variété des grandes religions, avec la richesse des cultures d'aujourd'hui.

Or, nous soutenons que les Universités catholiques ont un rôle décisif à jouer si l'Eglise doit se doter d'une politique de la recherche efficace et réaliste. Dans un tel domaine, comme il est évident, tout dépend de la collaboration volontaire désintéressée. Toute tentative d'organisation par voie autoritaire serait vouée à l'échec en partant. Mais, si les Universités catholiques sont convaincues de l'importance de la recherche coordonnée dans l'Eglise, nous estimons qu'elles seront amenées à rendre un service éminent à notre temps. Dans l'état actuel des choses ce service pourrait s'expliciter de la manière suivante:

Le potentiel des Universités catholiques: Il faudrait en premier lieu que les institutions catholiques d'enseignement supé-

rieur se rendent compte de l'extraordinaire potentiel qu'elles représentent au service de la recherche dans l'Eglise. Selon une statistique citée au début, il existe actuellement environ 600 institutions d'enseignement supérieur dans l'Eglise. Combien de professeurs, de chercheurs, de facultés, de départements, de centres de recherche, de laboratoires, de bibliothèques dans toutes ces institutions? Voyons seulement le nombre de facultés ou départements de théologie. La F.I.U.C. en a dressé une liste qui comprend plus de 150 facultés ou départements de théologie ou de sciences religieuses. Ajoutons que ces institutions sont réparties dans toutes les régions du monde, insérées dans toutes les cultures, les plus anciennes comme les plus récentes.

Il nous semble urgent que les responsables de l'éducation supérieure dans l'Eglise prennent conscience du dynamisme culturel qu'ils représentent et des immenses possibilités de leurs institutions. La catholicité de ces institutions ne se traduit pas uniquement dans leurs programmes ou dans leurs enseignements; leur catholicité apparait aussi dans l'universalité de leur implantation géographique et dans l'identification des Universités catholiques avec l'extrême variété des cultures dans le monde.

Pour évaluer avec plus d'exactitude les potentialités de l'Université catholique en ce domaine, et pour faire progresser l'idée d'une libre concertation entre chercheurs dans l'Eglise, ne pourrait-on suggérer que ce thème fasse l'objet de discussions au plan local, dans des réunions régionales et, éventuellement, dans quelques rencontres internationales préparées avec soin? Déjà quelques initiatives concrètes favorisées officiellement par la F.I.U.C. laissent espérer des résultats prometteurs. Le premier objectif à atteindre, croyons-nous, sera de créer une conviction commune concernant le rôle indispensable des Universités catholiques pour promouvoir une libre concertation de la recherche dans l'Eglise.

Les deux orientations de la recherche: Il faut bien s'entendre cependant, sur le sens qu'il faut donner au mot *recherche*. Celle-ci peut être exercée par un savant en quête de nouvelles découvertes, autant que par un professeur dispensant un enseignement créateur. La recherche en effet, comprend aussi bien les activités de découvertes que l'effort original de réflexion, d'approfondissement et d'application du savoir aux nouveaux problèmes

de l'humanité. On peut donc inclure dans les activités de recherche, d'une part, la « recherche de pointe » et, d'autre part, la « réflexion scientifique ». Cette double préoccupation de la recherche est une garantie d'enrichissement aussi bien pour la science que pour l'éducation supérieure prise dans son ensemble. Le chercheur dans son laboratoire, le savant dans sa bibliothèque font de la recherche, certes; mais aussi le professeur qui fournit un effort original de synthèse pour relier les richesses de la culture aux besoins de ses étudiants. Ajoutons-même que ces deux types d'activité intellectuelle sont indispensables pour que la recherche, au sens plein, porte ses fruits. Ce fait a été bien analysé dans l'ouvrage de Bonneau et Corry [13]. Ils font remarquer que, sans la lumière de la réflexion critique, « la recherche de pointe risque de se fourvoyer. D'autre part, la réflexion scientifique qui ne se maintient pas en liaison étroite avec la recherche de pointe tend à devenir insensible au monde et à la vie et à spéculer dans le vide ». Ces auteurs emploient aussi les expressions anglaises « frontier research » et « reflective inquiry » pour distinguer les deux aspects complémentaires de la recherche. Edward Shils parle dans le même sens de « fundamental research » et d'« adaptive research » [14].

Ces remarques ne sont pas sans importance pour notre propos. La recherche, telle que nous l'entendons — aussi bien les découvertes de pointe que la réflexion créatrice du professeur — est une activité qui devrait intéresser pratiquement tous les universitaires catholiques et toutes les institutions post-secondaires, même si elles ne sont pas toujours dotées des services de recherche qui seraient désirables idéalement. En d'autres termes, aucune Université catholique reconnue, aucun chercheur spécialisé, aucun professeur vraiment qualifié, ne devraient se sentir étrangers au besoin d'une recherche concertée dans l'Eglise; et tous devraient avoir la possibilité pratique de s'y engager, s'ils le désirent.

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[13] L.-P. Bonneau et J. A. Corry, *Poursuivre l'Optimum. Politique de la recherche dans les Universités au Canada.* Ottawa, Association des Universités et Collèges du Canada 1972, p. 34.

[14] Edward Shils, *The Intellectuals and the Powers and Other Essays.* Chicago-London, The University of Chicago Press, 1974, p. 459.

Collaborations indispensables: Ce programme ne saurait cependant être réalisé que si se développe une collaboration effective entre les représentants de la pastorale et les responsables de l'enseignement supérieur. L'Université, certes, de même que chaque chercheur, conserve sa liberté propre et ses initiatives originales; c'est la condition même de la créativité intellectuelle. Mais cette liberté devrait pouvoir se concilier avec des programmes précis de recherche qu'on aurait définis préalablement à travers un dialogue volontaire et très ouvert entre pasteurs et universitaires. Les uns et les autres devraient en arriver à déterminer un certain nombre de besoins prioritaires, c'est-à-dire des problèmes plus urgents, auxquels les chercheurs pourraient se consacrer dans un esprit de libre service.

Une politique de la science dans l'Eglise, ne peut être stimulée d'abord par de larges subventions officielles; elle doit essentiellement compter sur le soutien des responsables dans l'Eglise et dans les Universités. Déjà, en certains pays, des réunions ont lieu entre Evêques, représentants des Universités ou instituts de recherche. Il est à souhaiter que, dans ces échanges, on réussisse à dépasser le stade des discussions purement administratives, ou des consultations occasionnelles; une action à long terme s'impose. Il faudrait qu'on en vienne progressivement à préciser des programmes bien définis, des projets concrets qu'on aura ensemble conçus comme un service urgent. C'est ainsi qu'on en arrivera à une véritable politique de la recherche dans l'Eglise.

Procéder par étapes: Par ailleurs, il faudrait être réaliste et procéder du plus simple au plus complexe. On imagine difficilement que, dans l'Eglise universelle, on puisse élaborer tout de suite une programmation générale de la recherche. C'est par étapes qu'il faudra avancer, en tentant des expériences limitées à un problème particulier ou propres à une région et à un pays. On devrait d'abord s'arrêter à des sujets de recherche correspondant aux capacités concrètes de quelques institutions particulièrement intéressées. Il ne devrait pas être impossible, à un groupe restreint d'universitaires et de représentants des Evêques, de formuler des problèmes urgents qui pourraient inspirer des recherches concertées. Ceci suppose évidemment qu'existe entre les Universités catholiques et les autorités ecclésiastiques un climat de véritable compréhension et de collaboration [15]

5. Conclusion

Nous nous sommes demandé en ces pages pourquoi l'Eglise d'aujourd'hui a besoin d'Universités. Nous avons constaté que la société post-industrielle, centrée sur la planification et la recherche, pose des problèmes nouveaux à l'apostolat de la pensée. L'Eglise qui, de par sa nature, a une vocation pédagogique éminente, désire entrer en dialogue avec la culture de ce temps, pour y apporter la lumière de l'évangile. L'Université apparaît ainsi comme le lieu privilégié où l'intégration des savoirs humains et du message chrétien peut être poursuivie avec méthode et continuité. Dans cette perspective on peut affirmer que l'Université est indispensable à l'Eglise dans l'accomplissement de sa mission intégrale. Sans doute l'Eglise pourrait survivre sans Universités, mais son action serait sérieusement appauvrie si elle était privée des ressources de l'enseignement supérieur, surtout de la théologie. Comme le déclarait Paul VI, le Magistère est conscient que « sans l'aide de la théologie il pourrait sans doute conserver et enseigner la foi, mais difficilement atteindre le degré de plénitude et de profondeur dont il a besoin pour remplir pleinement sa charge » [16]. C'est la conviction qui justifie l'enseignement supérieur et il est réconfortant de constater qu'un consensus s'affirme à ce propos chez les universitaires catholiques. Leur persuasion s'est exprimée dans l'importante déclaration qui a suivi le congrès de Rome de 1972.

Si on considère maintenant l'évolution du monde universitaire, des besoins nouveaux apparaissent et, conséquemment, des responsabilités nouvelles s'imposent aux catholiques. D'une part,

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[15] Le problème de la recherche dans l'Eglise est traité plus longuement dans le ch. V[e] de notre livre, *L'Université entre l'engagement et la liberté*. Rome, Presses de l'Université Grégorienne 1972; et dans notre article de *Seminarium* (Rome), fasc. 4, (octobre-décembre 1974): « Participation des Universités catholiques à une programmation de la recherche dans l'Eglise ».

[16] Discours au Congrès International sur la théologie de Vatican II. Octobre 1966. *A.A.S.*, 24 nov. 1966, pp. 892-893; *Documentation catholique*, 16 oct. 1966, p. 1738.

on assiste à une mutation des méthodes pédagogiques provoquée par l'innovation des moyens de communication (TV éducative, technologie de l'éducation, enseignements à distance, etc.). Par ailleurs l'Université moderne est appelée à une révision profonde de son rôle dans une société dominée par la recherche et la planification. Les rapports traditionnels entre l'enseignement et la recherche sont mis en cause. Le fait que les sociétés modernes, riches ou pauvres, reconnaissent désormais l'importance centrale de la recherche, devrait inciter l'Eglise elle-même à promouvoir une concertation plus efficace de la recherche parmi les catholiques. Grâce à la collaboration des Universités catholiques, une véritable programmation de la recherche pourrait s'instaurer et permettre à l'Eglise de mieux s'attaquer aux problèmes les plus urgents de notre temps.

Si on admet que l'enseignement supérieur occupe un rôle nécessaire dans l'Eglise, il faut que, dans la réalité des faits, l'Université catholique puisse se développer et compter sur l'étroite collaboration de tous les intéressés. On voudrait surtout souligner deux exigences qui semblent s'imposer plus directement. En simplifiant les formules, on pourrait dire que le progrès de l'Université catholique dépendra d'abord de la mentalité ecclésiale manifestée par les universitaires et également de l'intérêt que les pasteurs de l'Eglise montreront pour l'enseignement supérieur.

La mentalité ecclésiale des universitaires: La question de fond est celle-ci: tous les universitaires catholiques ont-ils suffisamment conscience du service ecclésial éminent qui leur est demandé? Il faut reconnaître que sur ce point un net progrès a été réalisé. On peut dire qu'en général une conscience plus explicitement ecclésiale s'est développée au sein des Universités catholiques. Si dans le passé on a pu accuser les Universités d'être trop isolées ou trop préoccupées de leur propre autonomie, on doit admettre qu'aujourd'hui l'accent est mis sur le service spécifique que ces institutions sont appelées à rendre dans l'Eglise. Cette attitude positive est prometteuse car elle permet de faciliter les indispensables collaborations qui sont nécessaires pour que l'Université assume en plénitude son rôle propre dans la communauté ecclésiale. Que cet idéal ne soit pas toujours atteint, les universitaires catholiques seront les premiers à l'admettre; car ils savent que toute institution doit progresser par un retour constant à son inspiration originelle, et cela suppose une animation sans cesse renouvelée.

L'intérêt de la hiérarchie pour l'éducation supérieure: La seconde question s'exprimerait ainsi: Quelle place les conférences épiscopales et les diocèses estiment-ils devoir réserver aux Universités dans les plans d'ensemble de l'apostolat? En certains pays une commission épiscopale s'occupe nommément de favoriser les relations entre les Universités catholiques et les pasteurs. Un climat nouveau de collaboration semble s'instaurer: les Evêques recourent plus fréquemment aux Universités pour leur demander des services précis et leur confier des recherches. Les universitaires de leur côté apprennent à participer aux préoccupations pastorales des Evêques. Pour réaliser cette collaboration mutuelle, il n'est pas inutile parfois de rappeler aux catholiques toute l'importance de l'apostolat intellectuel, aussi bien pour l'Eglise locale que pour l'Eglise universelle. La tâche n'est pas toujours facile, car certains courants anti-intellectuels favorisent davantage l'immédiatisme de l'action que le patient effort de l'éducation supérieure. A la longue, cependant — et l'expérience en témoigne — l'influence profonde de l'Eglise a toujours nécessité de généreux engagements au niveau de l'éducation. Ce qui contribuera le plus à la promotion de l'enseignement catholique, c'est évidemment la conviction de son importance pour l'Eglise, mais c'est aussi le soutien et l'encouragement positif qui seront manifestés à ses responsables.

Les rapports entre l'Université catholique et la hiérarchie ont toujours présenté des aspects fort délicats. Des difficultés inhérentes existent et il faut les reconnaître. La déclaration de Rome s'est penchée sur ces problèmes et a indiqué des voies de solution qui devraient faciliter, pour les pasteurs comme pour les universitaires, l'exercice de leurs responsabilités propres.

La promotion effective de l'Université: Par delà les divergences ou les difficultés occasionnelles cependant, ce qui devrait faire l'unanimité c'est la confiance des pasteurs et des éducateurs envers l'institution universitaire et leur volonté commune de soutenir une oeuvre indispensable à l'Eglise.

C'est l'encouragement et l'assurance que le Saint Père lui-même a voulu réitérer à plusieurs reprises.

Au congrès de novembre 1972, Paul VI disait aux délégués: « Nous voudrions répondre à un appel que Nous avons relevé dans votre document préparatoire. Les Universités catholiques attendent de la hiérarchie de l'Eglise, disiez-vous, une 'inspiration, une impulsion et un encouragement'. Cette aide, nous désirons de grand coeur vous la prodiguer. Nous sommes bien conscient en effet de vos soucis. Nous apprécions votre courage face aux difficultés de l'heure et Nous Nous réjouissons de vous voir associés avec Nous dans cette pastorale de la pensée, si urgente et si indispensable aujourd'hui. Et tout d'abord, demeurez bien convaincus de la vocation singulière des Universités catholiques dans la société moderne » [17].

Dans une lettre adressée à l'Université du Sacré-Coeur de Milan, le Pape n'hésitait pas à parler du rôle « nécessaire » et « irremplaçable » des Universités catholiques: « Les problèmes de l'Université catholique sont nombreux et graves, sur le plan académique et sur le plan administratif. On sera réconforté par cette pensée que s'employer au progrès de l'Université catholique c'est remplir une tâche ecclésiale irremplaçable et urgente. L'Université catholique est un élément nécessaire de l'Eglise qui vit dans le monde et au service du monde » [18].

[17] *L'Osservatore Romano*, 27-28 novembre 1972.
[18] *L'Osservatore Romano*, 12 décembre 1971.

Il problema dell'Evangelizzazione della Cina di oggi

J. SHIH, S. J.

(Alcune riflessioni sui rapporti del seminario ecumenico di Båstad sulle implicazioni teologiche della Nuova Cina)

Il problema dell'evangelizzazione della Cina di oggi è molteplice. Taluni lo ritengono anche insolubile. La difficoltà proviene per lo più dal fatto che al presente il continente cinese si trova sotto il regime comunista. Da un quarto di secolo i missionari esteri ne sono stati espulsi. Il clero indigeno che è rimasto è stato ridotto alla quasi completa inattività. Se in qualche modo la vita cristiana persiste, le manca nondimeno il necessario sostegno della predicazione e dei sacramenti della Chiesa. [1] Quando i cristiani cinesi potranno godere delle cure pastorali della Chiesa? Quando, ed a quale condizione, il governo cinese tollererà la presenza della Chiesa nel suo territorio nazionale? Queste sono questioni le cui risposte eccedono la competenza della teologia.

Tuttavia, mentre la Cina si sottrae all'influsso salvifico della Chiesa, essa si dà decisamente da fare per la propria salvezza, e ciò non solo sul piano economico-sociale, ma anche su quello morale e quasi religioso. Quest'ultimo lato delle esperienze cinesi interessa anche i teologi. Il seminario ecumenico che si teneva a Lovanio nel settembre 1974 ne costituisce infatti una buona prova. Questo seminario è stato promosso unitamente dalla « Lutheran World Federation » di Ginevra e dall'istituto « Pro Mundi Vita » di Bruxelles. La questione generale che esso si propone di trattare è questa: « Che differenza comporta per il mondo cristiano il fatto che da un quarto di secolo circa una

[1] *China News Analysis* (Hong Kong). No. 935 (Oct. 1973).

quinta parte della popolazione mondiale si è impegnata in un'impresa, tanto ardita quanto insolita, di creare, soltanto con mezzi umani, una nuova umanità e una nuova società?

Per preparare questo seminario, un altro più ristretto è stato tenuto a Båstad in Svezia, dal 29 gennaio al 2 febbraio del 1974. Sono stati proposti cinque temi particolari che sono: (1) il nuovo uomo in Cina e nel cristianesimo; (2) fede e ideologia nel contesto della nuova Cina; (3) antagonismo rivoluzionario e amore cristiano; (4) la Nuova Cina e la storia della salvezza; (5) implicazioni della Nuova Cina per l'auto-conoscenza della Chiesa. Ciascun tema è stato trattato da un protestante e da un cattolico. I loro rapporti sono stati raccolti in un volume sotto il titolo « Implicazioni teologiche della Nuova Cina ». Il volume è stato pubblicato e distribuito dai due enti promotori [2].

Benché nessuno dei dieci rapporti del seminario preparatorio di Båstad miri a risolvere il problema dell'evangelizzazione della Cina di oggi — che è l'argomento di questo saggio — ciascuno di essi contribuisce ad illustrane l'uno o l'altro aspetto rilevante. Perciò ce ne occupiamo. Ce ne serviamo infatti come punto di partenza e di riferimento nel discutere alcuni punti che riguardano il nostro soggetto. Essi sono: (1) la possibilità della salvezza nelle condizioni attuali della Cina, (2) il ruolo della Chiesa nella salvezza del popolo cinese, e (3) l'annuncio del Vangelo ai cinesi di oggi.

I. La possibilità della salvezza

I cinesi che formano circa una quinta parte dell'umanità vivono sotto un regime comunista non alterato dal revisionismo. Essi si sono sottratti all'influsso salvifico della Chiesa. Tra di loro pochi hanno sentito il nome di Gesù; pochissimi hanno ricevuto il battesimo; ma la stragrande maggioranza non ha mai sentito il Vangelo. Anzi è molto probabile che non ne abbia l'occasione nemmeno durante tutta la vita. Avranno questi la possibilità di salvarsi? Ecco la questione che si presenta naturalmente alla mente.

[2] *Theological implications of the New China*: Papers presented at the ecumenical Seminar held in Bastad, Sweden from January 29 to February 2, 1974. Published by Lutheran World Federation and Pro Mundi Vita.

In linea di massima la risposta a questa domanda è pronta. L'insegnamento ordinario della Chiesa ammette la possibilità della salvezza fuori della Chiesa. Inoltre il Concilio Vaticano II ha dichiarato possibile la salvezza di « quelli che senza colpa ignorano il Vangelo di Cristo e la sua Chiesa, e che tuttavia cercano sinceramente Dio, e coll'aiuto della grazia si sforzano di compiere con le opere la volontà di Lui » [3]. Quindi, secondo l'insegnamento della Chiesa, i cinesi, pur non avendo l'occasione di sentire il Vangelo, purché si sforzino di vivere una vita onesta con la grazia di Dio, possono salvarsi. Di fatto, su questo punto tutti i partecipanti al seminario preparatorio sono d'accordo.

Tuttavia, la stessa Chiesa riconosce pure la necessità assoluta della fede. Basandosi su questo principio, la teologia cattolica ha sempre ritenuto che una certa conoscenza della rivelazione divina sia una condizione necessaria della salvezza. Essa ha sollevato dunque un'ulteriore questione che riguarda la possibilità della conoscenza della rivelazione divina per coloro che vivono fuori della Chiesa. Varie teorie sono state avanzate per spiegare tale possibilità. Quella della « rivelazione primitiva » fu sostenuta nel secolo scorso. Di recente si è parlato piuttosto della « alleanza di Dio con Noè ».

Una questione attinente è discussa nel seminario preparatorio di Båstad. Essa riguarda la relazione tra la storia della Cina e la storia della salvezza. Tre opinioni vengono proposte. La prima considera la rivoluzione comunista in Cina come « un'irruzione della salvezza di Dio nella storia ». La seconda la ritiene « una versione secolarizzata della storia della salvezza ». La terza sostiene invece che essa non sia che « un segno attuale della salvezza », cioè: « un segno della presenza e dell'azione di Dio nell'ambito della storia della Cina ».

1. La prima tesi è avanzata da Richard Madsen. Questi è stato designato, assieme a James A. Scherer, per riferire sul tema « Implicazioni teologiche della Nuova Cina » [4]. A differenza del suo socio protestante, che si accontenta di trattare il modo concreto di rinnovare la comunione tra la Chiesa occidentale e la

[3] *Lumen Gentium*, N. 16.
[4] *Theological implications of the New China*. pp. 167-185.

comunità cristiana in Cina, egli si avventura a ridimensionare la missione della Chiesa alla luce delle esperienze rivoluzionarie cinesi.

L'argomento che adduce per sostenere la sua tesi suppone una certa teologia e un certo modo di interpretare la storia. Per quanto riguarda la teologia, Madsen rintraccia le differenze di opinione tra i teologi cattolici in materia ecclesiologica alle loro origini nello stesso mistero di salvezza. I teologi, egli dice, convengono sul fatto che Dio offre la sua salvezza a tutti gli uomini, ma non concordano riguardo al come e dove questo dono viene loro offerto. Egli divide dunque i teologi in due scuole, a seconda delle risposte che questi danno a quest'ultima questione.

La scuola tradizionale restringerebbe il mistero di salvezza nelle sfere della religione. Essa sostiene infatti che la presenza salvifica di Gesù sia mediata, e che avvenga « soprattutto per mezzo delle istituzioni e pratiche religiose, in modo particolare, di quelle della tradizione giudeo-cristiana ». Secondo la medesima scuola, « i punti di contatto con la vita divina e con la verità sono i rituali sacri e la dottrina sacra della comunità cristiana » [5].

La scuola moderna estenderebbe la scena del mistero di salvezza al mondo intero. Infatti, essa stacca la salvezza dalla religione e la riferisce direttamente agli uomini. Secondo questa scuola,

> il punto focale è il mondo, invece della Chiesa. Il peccato è l'umanità marginale; e la salvezza, l'umanizzazione. La grazia di Dio ci invita non a lasciare l'esistenza umana, ma a penetrarne più profondamente il mistero. Soltanto diventando figli degli uomini, diventiamo noi figli di Dio. Situazioni secolari, invece di quelle religiose, sono le principali crocevie tra Dio e gli uomini. [6]

Il Madsen si schiera dalla parte della scuola moderna.

Il suo modo di interpretare la storia è determinato dalla sociologia e dalla fenomenologia religiosa, dalle quali egli deriva i due concetti operativi della sua analisi: cioè « l'asceticismo rivoluzionario » di Max Weber e « il sacro » di Rudolf Otto.

Secondo Weber, l'asceticismo è « un modo di vivere basato

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 169.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

sulla devozione a certi ideali o valori non-materiali con una rinunzia di piaceri fisici ed un'insistenza su semplicità, disciplina, e altruismo » [7]. Per essere rivoluzionario, l'asceticismo deve essere inoltre indirizzato a questo mondo e provveduto di una certa escatologia. Madsen sostiene che tale definizione si avveri nelle esperienze rivoluzionarie cinesi.

Essendo un modo di vivere basato sulla devozione a certi ideali o valori non-materiali, l'asceticismo ha necessariamente una dimensione religiosa. Perciò, senza pretendere che « quelli che dirigono la rivoluzione permanente in Cina siano cristiani anonimi », Madsen crede nondimeno che « vi è davvero qualcosa di sacro percettibile nell'asceticismo rivoluzionario dei leaders della rivoluzione cinese » [8]. Anzi egli paragona l'esperienza del sacro dei leaders cinesi a quella dei membri degli ordini religiosi nei periodi più felici della loro storia.

Il sacro, quale Otto lo definisce, ha il suo aspetto demoniaco, come pure quello divino. Il primo si distingue dal secondo dai suoi frutti. Ora Madsen ritiene che « molti frutti dell'asceticismo rivoluzionario cinese sembrano essere ottimi », e che essi prevalgono di gran lunga su quelli cattivi. Quindi egli conclude che la rivoluzione comunista in Cina sia « un'irruzione della salvezza di Dio nella storia » e invita la Chiesa a « celebrarla quale un dono del Signore della storia » [9].

La tesi di Madsen è ardita, ma il suo argomento è debole, perché consiste in un ragionamento zoppicante a causa dei termini medi equivoci. Infatti, Madsen sostituisce il concetto proprio del Dio cristiano con il concetto generico del sacro e scambia quest'ultimo a sua volta con il concetto ancora più generico dei valori non-materiali o ideali.

2. La seconda tesi è sostenuta da Choan-seng Song cui, assieme ai cattolici Charbonnier e Trivière, era stato assegnato il tema « La Nuova Cina e la storia della salvezza » [10]. Egli propone il suo argomento, segnalando innanzi tutto questa questione cruciale:

> La storia della salvezza intensamente esibita sia nel Vecchio che nel Nuovo Testamento dev'essere ritenuta come la

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 176.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 178.
[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 175 e 179.
[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 113-134.

norma assoluta con la quale gli avvenimenti nel mondo vengono scelti arbitrariamente per essere incorporati nella salvezza di Dio in Cristo, oppure, essa deve essere considerata come un modello o un tipo della salvezza di Dio che si è manifestato in modo particolarmente conciso nell'antico Israele e nella storia della Chiesa e perciò si deve scoprire in vari gradi di intensità e di concentrazione anche nelle altre nazioni e negli altri popoli? [11]

La teologia tradizionale e quella della scuola della storia della salvezza, capeggiata da Oscar Cullmann, difendono il primo membro dell'alternativa [12]. Ma Song è di parere diverso. Per spiegarsi, egli si rifà alle teologie di Wolfhart Pannenberg e di Schubert Ogden [13]. Dal primo egli non adotta che il carattere universale della rivelazione di Dio nella storia. Dal secondo egli deriva i due principi dominanti del suo argomento che concernono, uno, l'immediatezza della relazione tra gli atti di Dio e gli avvenimenti storici e, l'altro, la specificazione degli atti propriamente divini.

I due principi sono addotti per colmare una mancanza nella teologia della rivelazione avanzata dal Pannenberg. Questi, infatti, nega l'auto-rivelazione di Dio. Non ammette che una rivelazione indiretta la quale si confonde con la storia. Inoltre, il suo concetto della storia si rifà a quello del filosofo tedesco Hegel. L'Ogden invece crede che Dio si rivela nei suoi atti. A suo parere, non tutti gli avvenimenti storici sono atti di Dio nello stesso senso. Alcuni di loro lo sono a un titolo particolare. Questi sono gli atti propriamente divini.

Il suo primo principio afferma che Dio agisce nelle storie delle nazioni « direttamente » e « non per estensione o espansione della storia della salvezza concepita in termini teologici occidentali » [14]. Il suo secondo principio serve per individuare gli atti propriamente divini. L'Ogden lo dichiara in questi termini:

Dovunque o nella misura in cui un avvenimento nella storia manifesta l'azione caratteristica di Dio, quale Creatore e Redentore, esso è effettivamente il suo atto in un senso in cui gli altri avvenimenti storici non lo sono. [15]

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 119.
[12] Song cita il seguente libro: Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, revised edition. Philadelphia, 1964.
[13] Song cita i seguenti libri: Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Salvation in History*. London, 1967; Schubert Odgen, *The Reality of God*. London, 1967.
[14] *Theological implications of the New China*. p. 121.

Song crede che tali condizioni si avverino negli avvenimenti attuali della Cina:

L'ordine che ora prevale nella Nuova Cina sembra riflettere parzialmente l'ordine che Dio ha introdotto nel caos e nel disordine con la creazione del mondo. La terra, che una volta veniva devastata e lasciata incolta dalle calamità naturali e dall'inumanità e brutalità degli uomini, ora ha cominciato a funzionare di nuovo per il benessere della popolazione cinese. E la società una volta dominata dal timore e dalle tenebre, ora sembra assumere il suo ruolo costruttivo per i suoi membri. [16]

Quindi egli vede negli avvenimenti attuali della Cina « una versione secolarizzata della storia della salvezza » — « nondimeno una storia della salvezza, benché il suo fondamento ideologico sia un materialismo ateistico » [17].

3. Anche Charbonnier e Trevière riconoscono l'azione di Dio negli avvenimenti della Cina contemporanea, ma essi prendono le mosse dalla tradizione teologica cattolica ed interpretano la relazione tra la storia della salvezza e la storia della Cina in conformità piuttosto all'insegnamento del Concilio Vaticano II.

Essi ammettono che la teologia cattolica aveva ereditato dalla filosofia medievale un dualismo tra la natura e il soprannaturale, tra il temporale e lo spirituale; ma fanno notare che di recente un tentativo comune si è distinto nelle varie scuole teologiche cattoliche per sopprimere tale dualismo in favore di una visione globale della storia. Secondo la nuova visione il dono della salvezza si troverebbe all'interno della storia dietro lo sforzo dell'umanità per dominare il suo destino. A loro parere, il compito della teologia consisterebbe dunque nel rilevare il senso profondo dell'esistenza umana.

Anche loro valutano positivamente la rivoluzione sociale in Cina. Credono infatti che il piano maoista dello sviluppo dia più importanza all'uomo che all'organizzazione materiale della sua

[15] Citato da Song. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 126-127.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 124.
[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 67-112.

società. Sul detto di Mao, « il morire per il popolo pesa più del monte Taishan », essi danno il seguente commento:

> Non è forse vero che i sacrifici volontariamente accettati rivelano la croce di Cristo nella vita dei cinesi? [19]

E dagli impegni dei cinesi nello sviluppo del loro paese essi rilevano il seguente senso cristiano:

> Se il lavoro dello sviluppo rivela l'azione del Creatore, le pene e sofferenze sopportate dai più valorosi cinesi a favore di questo lavoro non rivelano forse l'azione del Redentore? [20]

Però, la loro concezione della storia della salvezza si oppone diagonalmente a quella di Song. Per loro infatti la storia della salvezza, quale raccontata nella Bibbia, non è soltanto un « modello » o un « tipo della salvezza di Dio », ma l'unica storia della salvezza nella quale tutte le storie delle nazioni devono integrarsi. Ecco una loro dichiarazione:

> Il linguaggio della Chiesa è stato segnato dalla cultura giudeo-ellenica. I cristiani parlano di un avvenimento di salvezza che ebbe luogo al crocevia di Asia, Africa e Europa durante la dinastia Han della Cina. Per i cristiani, la destinazione è fondata sulla storia di un popolo particolare: Israele, « Popolo di Dio ». La fede cristiana si distingue appunto dal fatto che ha le sue radici nella storia. Se si strappasse dalle sue contingenze storiche per formulare il suo messaggio in termini astratti e universali, essa rinnegherebbe la sua originalità. [21]

Perciò, essi si distinguono anche dal Madsen e dal Song nell'interpretazione degli avvenimenti attuali della Cina. Essi non li considerano né come « un'irruzione della salvezza di Dio nella storia », né come « una versione secolarizzata della storia della salvezza ». La loro tesi è che questi non sono che « un segno attuale della salvezza », cioè « un segno della presenza e dell'azione di Dio nell'ambito della storia della Cina » [22].

Senza dubbio, la loro lettura della storia contemporanea della Cina si conforma meglio all'insegnamento del Concilio Vaticano II, che esorta i fedeli a scoprire i segni dei tempi ed a leggerli alla luce del Vangelo; e quindi la loro tesi ha su quelle del Madsen e del Song il vantaggio della sicurezza dottrinale.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 101.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 101.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 99.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

II. Il ruolo della Chiesa

Nella Bibbia il tempo messianico è paragonato alla mietitura e il fenomeno pentecostale è considerato concomitante alla nascita e crescita della Chiesa. Così, nel raccontare la conversione del centurione Cornelio, l'autore degli Atti degli Apostoli ebbe cura di rilevare che questi ancora pagano aveva ricevuto il dono dello Spirito Santo. Il fatto era addotto non per insinuare che la missione di Pietro presso il centurione romano fosse superflua; al contrario, esso aveva lo scopo di dimostrare precisamente che il tempo era ormai venuto per annunciare il Vangelo anche ai pagani. Quindi, secondo la Bibbia, l'avvento dello Spirito Santo nel mondo pagano non rende superflua l'attività missionaria della Chiesa, ma ne segna piuttosto il tempo opportuno.

La missionologia sia cattolica che protestante, nata nel periodo felice del colonialismo, conosce invece un'altra versione. La Bibbia parla dell'annuncio del Vangelo ai poveri come di una delle note caratteristiche del tempo messianico. La missionologia intende la parola « poveri » nel senso di povertà sia materiale che spirituale. I poveri sarebbero i pagani che sono privi di doni materiali, culturali e spirituali. Prevenuti da tale spirito, i cristiani riconoscono a mala pena i doni di Dio fuori del mondo cristiano. Il riconoscerli significherebbe infatti non solo la fine del colonialismo delle nazioni cristiane, ma anche quella delle missioni estere delle chiese cristiane. Ecco la causa remota e non confessata del letargo che oggi pervade il mondo cristiano riguardo alle attività missionarie della Chiesa nei paesi non cristiani.

Il caso è particolarmente grave per quanto riguarda la Cina, dove le pratiche passate della Chiesa non sono state specialmente raccomandabili e la politica attuale del governo non favorisce certo le attività missionarie della Chiesa. La questione sul ruolo della Chiesa nella salvezza del popolo cinese è dunque destinata a sollevare polemiche.

Il seminario preparatorio di Båstad non cerca polemiche, ma ci sono occasioni in cui gli autori dei vari rapporti non possono fare a meno di pronunciarsi su questo argomento spinoso. Quattro atteggiamenti si distinguono a questo proposito. Il Song nega il continuo ruolo delle chiese occidentali nella salvezza del popolo cinese. Julia Ching dubita che la Chiesa, quale si è dimostrata finora, abbia la necessaria preparazione per svolgere tale compito. Charbonnier e Trivière segnalano il fatto che le opere della Chiesa stanno cedendo all'opera di Cristo. Infine, Donald E. MacInnis ribadisce il continuo ruolo della Chiesa sia nell'offrire il culto divino che nell'annunciare il Vangelo.

1. L'atteggiamento del Song è ispirato anzitutto dalla sua teologia della rivelazione che pone la rivelazione di Dio negli atti di Dio che si manifestano negli avvenimenti della rivoluzione cinese. Giacché Dio si rivela ai cinesi nei suoi atti, egli non vede più nessuna necessità di importare il Vangelo dall'estero. Dice infatti:

> La storia della salvezza è presente già nelle storie delle nazioni, e in questo caso, nella storia della Nuova Cina. Questo annulla completamente il vecchio concetto della missione cristiana come l'estensione del cristianesimo occidentale. Inoltre, esso pone in questione la validità dell'interesse missionario attualmente dimostrato da certi gruppi di cristiani occidentali. La Cina potrebbe essere perduta per le chiese occidentali, ma non per Dio. Agitare e portare lo stendardo del Vangelo di nuovo alla Cina dai paesi occidentali, significa negare la presenza di Dio in Cina per mezzo dei suoi atti. [23]

Il medesimo atteggiamento sembra essere motivato anche da una concezione offuscata della Chiesa. Il Song sembra non distinguere tra la Chiesa istituita da Cristo e le istituzioni cristiane introdotte nel corso dei secoli per rispondere alle necessità dei tempi create dal continuo progresso della civiltà, soprattutto da quello della civiltà occidentale. Sarà questa la causa delle sue apprensioni, che portare il Vangelo dall'Occidente possa creare di nuovo la confusione tra la storia della salvezza e i valori culturali e morali dell'Occidente? [24]

2. Julia Ching tratta, insieme con il protestante Winfried Glüter, il tema « Fede e ideologia alla luce della Nuova Cina » [25].

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 121.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 121.
[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 15-33.

Essa non nega il ruolo della Chiesa nella salvezza dei cinesi. Anzi lo riconosce implicitamente. Tuttavia, passando in rassegna gli incontri del passato tra la Chiesa e la Cina, lei esprime la sua apprensione che la Chiesa, quale si è dimostrata sinora, non abbia la necessaria preparazione per svolgere la sua missione tra il popolo cinese. Quindi lei si augura che la Chiesa si sottoponga ad un'onesta auto-critica e si sbarazzi di certi comportamenti che in passato hanno contribuito ad offuscare ai cinesi il Vangelo che voleva portar loro.

Per lo stesso motivo la Ching è cauta rispetto al dialogo tra la Chiesa e il popolo cinese promosso da certi cristiani occidentali. Al presente, data l'attuale politica del governo cinese, lei non crede che tale dialogo sia molto raccomandabile. Ecco la sua ragione:

> I comunisti hanno sempre accusato il cristianesimo per le parti politiche che ha svolte in Cina nel passato. Prima di impegnarsi in un altro incontro i cristiani farebbero dunque meglio a pensarci attentamente. Se in passato sono stati ritenuti per il peggio come aggressori culturali, e per il meglio, come importatori condiscendenti di una religione non richiesta dalla popolazione locale, ora non danno forse l'impressione di truccarsi con l'opportunismo politico? E se, essendo adattabili e realistici, sono nondimeno pronti a cooperare con i cinesi secondo le condizioni da loro dettate, allora non offrono forse motivi supplementari per il lavoro di ricostruzione che significa in realtà una resa, una rinunzia di libertà? [26]

Certo le condizioni cambieranno. Un giorno i cinesi potranno concedersi un po' più di apertura. Ma la questione rimane se a quel momento i cristiani saranno preparati ad entrare con loro in un dialogo intelligente e costruttivo? La Ching ha i suoi dubbi che espone come segue:

> Dall'altro canto, se i cristiani che credono al dialogo aspettano un futuro migliore, quando la Cina si permetterà un po' più di diversità e di pluralismo nell'espressione intellettuale, che cosa pensano che i cinesi richiederanno allora? Interesserà loro il cristianesimo occidentale tale qual è adesso? Non ricorreranno forse piuttosto alla loro cultura tradizionale e alle loro tradizioni religiose che i cristiani occidentali considerano come obsolete e già morte? Non è forse necessario per il cristianesimo occidentale di venire a patti non solo con l'ateismo

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

comunista, ma anche con le tradizioni religiose non cristiane della Cina di sempre? Non è forse necessario per il cristianesimo occidentale esaminare le proprie condizioni, le sue divisioni e il suo desiderio di unità ecumenica, i suoi atteggiamenti verso la libertà umana e il pluralismo di espressioni teologiche? Si parla oggi dello sviluppo di teologie cristiane non-occidentali; sarà questa una cosa possibile senza una certa demitizzazione delle formule elleniche e scolastiche delle quali sono rivestite le tradizioni teologiche cristiane? [27]

A dire il vero, il rinnovamento della Chiesa che la Ching si augura è stata già prevenuta nel Concilio Vaticano II e nei vari atti della Santa Sede; ma lei lo presenta in un modo diverso: non per dichiarazioni ufficiali o ordini dei superiori, ma per semplici desiderati di un fedele cinese la cui solidarietà con il popolo non cristiano soffre a mala pena certa trascuratezza e incomprensione da parte dei suoi fratelli di fede, perché questa impedisce alla Chiesa di svolgere la sua missione salvifica tra i suoi. Sarà per questo che talune sue espressioni sembrano più emozionali che prudenti.

3. Il Charbonnier e il Trivière si sono ispirati ad una visione pia della realtà cinese. Da una parte, essi credono che l'atteggiamento del governo cinese verso la Chiesa non sia molto cambiato nel corso dei secoli. Dall'altra, essi ritengono che i sacrifici subiti dal popolo cinese a favore dello sviluppo nazionale sia un segno manifesto della loro partecipazione all'opera del Cristo redentore.

Infatti, essi contendono che in passato il governo imperiale in Cina fosse sempre diffidente delle organizzazioni della Chiesa e intollerante del suo insegnamento, e che la politica religiosa del governo attuale della Cina non faccia altro che proseguire tale tradizione secolare [28]. Tuttavia, essi si augurano che i leaders della Cina comunista, pur non soffrendo nessuna società all'interno della società cinese e nessuna dottrina all'infuori della dottrina comunista, non abbiano nondimeno nessuna difficoltà nel concedere ai cristiani cinesi la possibilità di celebrare liberamente il culto religioso, perché essi dicono che il culto cristiano potrebbe servire come un incentivo supplementare per la costruzione sociale della Cina [29].

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 109.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

Basandosi su tale pio desiderio, i due missionari veterani sviluppano la loro tesi sul significato ecclesiale della vita cristiana nella Cina comunista che comprende in sostanza tre affermazioni, cioè: (1) Privata delle strutture amministrative della Chiesa e delle sue attività missionarie, la vita dei cristiani in Cina è più che mai una « vita nascosta con Cristo in Dio ». (2) Nell'Eucaristia i cristiani in Cina nutriscono la loro fede, confermano il loro impegno per lo sviluppo nazionale, e stringono la loro unione con i fratelli in Cristo e di tutto il mondo. (3) Associandosi ai milioni dei loro concittadini nel compito laborioso di costruzione sociale, i cristiani in Cina dimostrano ai loro compagni di pena il valore redentore delle loro comuni sofferenze, indicando loro la figura paradossale del Cristo crocifisso e rivelando loro la vanità fondamentale del progresso di ogni civiltà e la validità precaria della saggezza di questo mondo [30].

Da questa tesi deriva la seguente duplice osservazione sul ruolo diminuito della Chiesa nella salvezza del popolo cinese:

(a) *Le « opere della Chiesa » cedono all'« opera di Cristo ».*

La Chiesa in Cina era conosciuta per le sue scuole, università, ospedali, e altre opere pie. Tali servizi erano i mezzi preferiti per rendere testimonianza a un vangelo di misericordia. Essi servivano anche da luogo di incontro con uomini di varie religioni. Per mezzo di tali istituzioni molti sono arrivati alla conoscenza di Cristo.

Tutto questo è stato nazionalizzato. La Cina conosce, in un modo radicale, l'esperienza di secolarizzazione che sta svolgendosi anche in altri paesi. Ciò che si richiede dai cristiani oggi è la testimonianza dell'esistenza personale rinnovata dalla fede. Questa fede, che si indirizza alla vita di ogni giorno, trova il suo sostegno soltanto nella preghiera comune e nelle conversazioni con i fratelli cristiani sulle situazioni concrete della vita.

(b) *Rispettare l'autonomia degli uomini nel condurre la loro società.*

Il senso di « autonomia » in Cina fu portato ad un punto culminante per reazione contro le invasioni straniere, proprio quando in Occidente la società si liberava sempre più dal

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

controllo della Chiesa. Oggi non si può più invocare la fede per legittimare un ordine sociale determinato. La fede consiste anzitutto in una legge di amore e di libertà. E' vero che la vita nuova con il Cristo risorto richiede un rinnovamento della condotta umana che San Paolo chiama « frutti dello Spirito »; ma queste esigenze esistenziali del Vangelo possono guidare le decisioni politiche, ma non impongono nessun codice di legge. E' come cittadini comuni che i cristiani devono prendere parte nella costruzione della città. La loro fede cristiana si rivela piuttosto attraverso un certo modo di vivere nel mondo. [31]

4. Donald E. MacInnis, l'esponente protestante del tema « Nuovo uomo in Cina e nel Cristianesimo », ha un concetto della Chiesa un po' diverso da quello del Charbonnier e del Trivière. Quindi, egli non parla della diminuzione del ruolo della Chiesa nella salvezza dei cinesi, ma lo ribadisce semplicemente e categoricamente.

Infatti, MacInnis riconosce il significato cristiano delle esperienze cinesi, ma ne segnala ad un tempo la limitatezza. Afferma quindi la necessità non solo di partecipare allo sviluppo umano, ma anche di proclamare il Vangelo e di celebrare il culto divino. Per questo egli cita, da un canto, la seguente dichiarazione dei 180 delegati asiatici presenti alla Conferenza sullo Sviluppo, tenuta a Tokyo nel 1970, a proposito delle questioni di Liberazione, Giustizia e Sviluppo nel contesto asiatico:

Nelle sofferenze dei poveri e degli oppressi vediamo le sofferenze di Cristo. Dovunque i malati vengono curati, gli affamati nutriti, i prigionieri liberati, dovunque individui e comunità si sono riconciliati e nazioni vivono in pace e cooperazione l'una con l'altra, vediamo la mano di Dio al lavoro. [32]

Dall'altro canto, egli ribadisce la conclusione di un seminario tenuto durante la medesima Conferenza che « il senso e destino della vita umana non si esauriscono nelle potenzialità aperte all'uomo nello sviluppo dentro la storia, la quale è soggetta al potere del peccato, della corruzione e della morte », che « l'uomo in Cristo è destinato alla comunione con Dio in questa vita e nella vita ventura », e che « da cristiani noi abbiamo il compito di partecipare allo sviluppo umano, di proclamare la speranza dell'uomo nel Vangelo di Gesù Cristo, e di offrire il culto al Signore glorioso » [33].

[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 151.

III. L'annuncio del Vangelo

Il seminario preparatorio di Båstad non tratta la questione sull'evangelizzazione della Cina di oggi. Tuttavia, dai modi nei quali i vari relatori dissertano sulle questioni attinenti si distinguono vari atteggiamenti riguardo a questo soggetto. I più espliciti sono quelli del Madsen e del Charbonnier e del Trivière.

1. Il Madsen raccomanda il dialogo e lo sviluppo di una relazione psicologica adatta al popolo cinese. Infatti, egli distingue due tipi di missione basati su due tipi di ecclesiologa. La vecchia ecclesiologia deriva dall'idea della salvezza ristretta nelle sfere religiose. Il tipo di missione basato su tale ecclesiologia mira a guadagnare un gran numero di convertiti alla Chiesa e a stabilire un apparato gerarchico in ciascuna area missionaria per soddisfre i bisogni spirituali. La nuova ecclesiologia, che deriva dall'idea della salvezza che si estende a tutto il mondo, definisce invece la Chiesa come sacramento. Secondo questa concezione, « essere in missione vuol dire entrare in un dialogo personale con tutti gli uomini che cercano di scoprire il senso ultimo della loro vita » [34].

Giacché la forma di un dialogo dipende dalle situazioni dei due interlocutori, il dialogo tra la Chiesa e la Cina prende necessariamente varie forme a seconda delle situazioni nelle quali si trova la Chiesa nelle diverse parti del mondo. Così le comunità cristiane nei paesi industriali, in modo particolare quelle degli Stati Uniti d'America, non potrebbero che svolgere una parte passiva. Dovrebbero piuttosto ascoltare che parlare, piuttosto imparare che insegnare:

Noi dobbiamo imparare le lezioni che l'esperienza della Nuova Cina può insegnarci sulle ingiustizie perpetrate dai nostri sistemi sociali, politici e economici sia verso i nostri popoli sia verso quelli del « terzo mondo ». Noi faremmo bene a fare della Chiesa nei nostri paesi un segno autentico della salvezza di Dio, sottomettendoci ad un pentimento genuino per i nostri

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 151.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 180.

peccati collettivi contro i popoli dell'Asia e iniziando il lavoro per la creazione di un nuovo uomo e una nuova società nel contesto sociale dei nostri paesi. [35]

Le comunità cristiane nel « terzo mondo » avrebbero una parte più positiva. La loro esperienza di oppresse le metterebbe in una migliore posizione per capire la relazione tra il Vangelo dell'amore e il compito di lottare per la giustizia sociale:

> Essi sono probabilmente in una posizione migliore di quella nostra per capire non solo i modi nei quali certi aspetti dell'esperienza rivoluzionaria cinese sono manifestazioni della salvezza di Dio, ma anche per parlare ai cinesi dei modi nei quali una fede cristiana autentica può formare la teoria e la prassi di una rivoluzione sociale genuina. [36]

Infine, il Madsen sostiene che per un dialogo aperto la presenza fisica tra uomini nelle loro situazioni storiche diverse sia « estremamente importante », ma « secondaria alla necessità di stabilire una presenza psicologica ». Quindi egli dice:

> Nel momento attuale della storia è certamente più importante per i cristiani, che vogliono essere in missione in Cina, rispondere alla sfida di sviluppare una relazione psicologica adatta, ciascuno in un modo appropriato alle sue situazioni storiche, con il popolo cinese, piuttosto che tentare di stabilire geograficamente una testa di ponte nella Repubblica Popolare in vista dell'annuncio del Vangelo. [37]

Per apprezzare giustamente l'opinione del Madsen, si deve tener presente che questi nutre un concetto secolarizzato della salvezza. Egli equipara la salvezza con « il superamento dell'alienazione dagli altri uomini, la quale è il peccato ». Per questo, a suo parere, il compito attuale della Chiesa non consiste tanto nell'annunciare dall'alto il Vangelo tramandato dagli apostoli, quanto nello « scoprire i modi nei quali uomini in tutte le parti del mondo stanno provando la salvezza di Dio nel superamento dell'alienazione dagli altri uomini, la quale è il peccato, e nel partecipare anche essa in tale superamento » [38].

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 181.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 181.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 182.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 174.

2. Charbonnier e Trivière parlano piuttosto della testimonianza e di ciò che viene chiamato « la catechesi antropologica ». Abbiamo menzionato la loro osservazione che i cristiani in Cina, associandosi ai loro concittadini nel compito laborioso della costruzione nazionale, dimostrano loro il valore redentore delle loro comuni sofferenze, « indicando loro la figura paradossale del Cristo crocifisso e rivelando loro la vanità fondamentale del progresso di ogni civiltà e la validità precaria della saggezza di questo mondo ». Ora esaminiamo come essi interpretano questo fatto.

Anzitutto, a differenza del Madsen, del Charbonnier e del Trivière riconoscono il compito della Chiesa di annunciare il Vangelo e di fare conversioni:

> La missione della Chiesa consiste nel portare la buona novella della salvezza a tutti quegli uomini che ancora vivono « nell'ombra della morte » e nell'incorporare il più gran numero possibile di essi nel suo corpo. [39]

Come il Madsen, pure loro rilevano l'importanza della definizione della Chiesa quale « sacramento della salvezza », e ne deducono una nuova concezione dell'evangelizzazione che non vuol imporre il Vangelo dall'alto e dall'esterno, ma riconoscendo il bene che si trova negli avvenimenti della Cina, cerca di scoprire in essi segni della presenza di Dio e di rilevarne il valore salvifico:

> Da questo punto di vista la Chiesa non è più il magazzino dei doni di Dio. Al contrario, essa deve essere una povera serva che cerca nella vita degli uomini i segni della presenza del suo sposo e si rallegra quando trova dei veri figli di Dio. La sua sola ricchezza è l'amore di Cristo. La sua missione consiste nel proclamare questo amore salvifico dovunque esso si solleva in mezzo alle nazioni. Invece di insegnare e « invitare la gente a sé », la Chiesa impara e va fuori dai figli di Dio dispersi nel mondo. Secondo il Vangelo di San Matteo, i veri discepoli di Cristo verranno giudicati non secondo la loro virtù, ma secondo la loro capacità di riconoscere la presenza del Signore nelle persone che soffrono e sperano, qualunque sia la loro religione o ideologia.
>
> Perché ebbi fame e mi deste da mangiare; ebbi sete, e mi deste da bere; fui pellegrino e mi alloggiaste; ero nudo

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

> e mi rivestiste; infermo, e mi visitaste; carcerato, e veniste a trovarmi (Mat. 25: 35-36).
>
> La liberazione di Dio in amore sta dietro le generose sofferenze di molti cinesi. Tocca ai cristiani di scoprire questo amore. [40]

Ma, diversamente dal Madsen, il Charbonnier e il Trivière considerano la presenza fisica tra i cinesi e il condividere le loro sofferenze una condizione necessaria per svolgere la missione della Chiesa tra i cinesi.

Sarà forse perché con le parole « cristiani » e « noi » essi indicano piuttosto soltanto i cristiani cinesi?

Ma il dialogo e la testimonianza non sono che le espressioni esterne di un'attività missionaria che di solito si chiama l'evangelizzazione. La loro efficacia deriva dalla fede dei cristiani che li mettono in atto. Ora la fede richiede la Parola di Dio come il suo oggetto connaturale. Quindi, affinché il dialogo e la testimonianza portino il loro frutto, bisogna che i cristiani si rivolgano costantemente alla Parola di Dio e ne capiscano il messaggio attuale.

3. A questo proposito vanno segnalati i due rapporti interessanti sul tema « Antagonismo rivoluzionario e amore cristiano ». I due relatori sono rispettivamente il protestante Raymond L. Whitehead e il cattolico Thomas Berry [42]. Il Whitehead dà un'esegèsi illuminante del senso maoista di « antagonismo rivoluzionario ». La parola « antagonismo » o meglio « animosità » — questa infatti è la parola usata dal Whitehead — è un eufemismo. Il termine proprio è « ostilità » o « odio ». Il Whitehead spiega che nella concezione maoista « l'opposto dell'odio non è l'amore, ma il servilismo, l'accettazione apatica di una posizione inferiore » [43]. Egli sottolinea, tuttavia, il fatto che Mao rifiuta il concetto dell'amore universale, ma ne aggiunge la seguente giustificazione:

> Siamo infatti « chiamati » per rivelare la presenza di Dio tra gli uomini. L'unico modo per noi di compiere questa missione è essere noi stessi « presenti » a tutti gli uomini e condividere il loro fardello. Questo è il senso e il costo della nostra « vocazione ». [41]

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 102.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

> Il concetto dell'amore universale si basa sull'idea di una natura umana universale. Mao rifiuta tale idea come la base dell'amore tra le persone. A suo giudizio, tale amore universale non si trova in una società divisa dalle classi. Quando lo sfruttamento e l'oppressione di una classe da parte di un'altra saranno stati superati, allora una natura umana universale e un amore universale tra gli uomini diventeranno forse possibili. La natura umana si crea nel corso della lotta. Essa non è una realtà data nella situazione presente, ma una speranza, uno scopo. E' dunque un errore formulare una politica sull'assunzione di una natura umana universale come una realtà presente. Il Merleau-Ponty ha giustamente osservato che i Marxisti « si oppongono alla morale liberale perché questa suppone un'umanità come una realtà esistente, mentre essi mirano a crearla ». [44]

Quale sarebbe dunque l'atteggiamento di Mao verso la carità cristiana? Whitehead risponde:

> Se l'amore cristiano vuol dire l'amore universale che trascende le distinzioni tra le classi e la lotta delle classi, allora Mao lo riterrebbe non solo illusorio ma anche pernicioso alla lotta per la liberazione. [45]

Nonostante ciò, il Whitehead crede che il problema teologico centrale, sollevato dalla rivoluzione cinese, non riguardi tanto la relazione tra l'odio e l'amore, quanto la relazione tra la fedeltà alla croce e la partecipazione alla lotta per la liberazione. Egli illustra il senso di questo problema come segue:

> La croce rappresenta la debolezza quale mezzo per la vittoria. Essa suggerisce uno stile di vita che si arrende ai poteri oppressivi, ma li vince proprio nell'arrendersi. Inoltre, la croce simboleggia la grazia che ci salva perché noi stessi non possiamo salvarci. In che modo dunque la grazia, la resa e la vittoria per mezzo della debolezza, simboleggiata dalla croce, si riferiscono alla lotta rivoluzionaria per la liberazione e all'impossessarsi del potere da parte degli oppressi? [46]

Dal canto suo, il Berry tenta un'interpretazione fenomenologica del Maoismo. A suo parere, « i movimenti socialisti marxisti in tutto il mondo, che sembrano basarsi sui fatti storici, sono

[42] Rispettivamente *ibid.*, pp. 71-85 e 55-70.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 76.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 75.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 75.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

in realtà strutturati su una mitologia, su un sistema simbolico molto sviluppato che evoca una risposta potente in molte parti del mondo » [47]. Il genio di Mao consisterebbe proprio « nella sua evocazione dei poteri inerenti nelle profondità mitiche dell'inconscio » [48]. Quando questi dichiarò nel 1940 la sua volontà di cambiare non solo « una Cina che è politicamente oppressa ed economicamente sfruttata in una Cina che è politicamente libera ed economicamente prospera », ma anche « la Cina che è stata tenuta ignorante ed arretrata dalla preponderanza della vecchia cultura in una Cina illuminata e progressiva sotto la spinta di una nuova cultura », egli avrebbe proposto ai cinesi non solo un « obiettivo storico », ma anche un « ideale mitico », paragonabile alla « nuova Gerusalemme » di San Giovanni e al « Giorno del Signore » degli antichi profeti. La strada che ci conduce passerebbe sempre « attraverso lotte, attraverso sofferenze trasformatrici » [49].

Il Berry crede che con la sua visione mitologica Mao abbia introdotto in Cina un modo di coscienza che si oppone decisamente sia a quello che esiste nelle società tradizionali inclinate alla religione, sia a quello che esiste nelle società razionalistiche e secolarizzate dell'Occidente moderno. « Le virtù di uno », egli dice, « sono vizi per l'altro, perché quelle medesime virtù che sostengono l'ordine attuale di vita nelle società tradizionali sono ritenute i più grandi ostacoli per la realizzazione della forma nuova e purificata di esistenza sociale ricercata dall'altro » [50]. Infatti, nel mondo di Mao

> nessun amore, nessun'affettuosità, nessuna virtù, nel contesto del vecchio ordine, è di qualche significato umano, se non come una forza controrivoluzionaria. Rimpiangere la morte di un genitore giustiziato come traditore è rendere se stesso un traditore. La vera misericordia, la Grande Misericordia, consiste piuttosto nell'accettare qualunque sofferenza per lo sviluppo storico della nuova sacra comunità. [51]

Quindi, nella concezione maoista l'antagonismo rivoluzionario sarebbe in realtà la Grande Misericordia; invece l'amore cristiano non potrebbe essere che un'ipocrisia, un vero antagonismo. Tale infatti è il problema che il Maoismo solleva contro il Cristianesimo. Il Berry lo dichiara in questi termini:

> Così in un contesto marxista la questione di antagonismo rivoluzionario e amore cristiano viene tradotta nella frase, amore rivoluzionario e antagonismo cristiano. Infatti, il rivoluzionario è colui che mette in atto la Grande Misericordia. Egli è colui che capisce veramente il senso autentico della benevolenza a un altro, e non soltanto a un altro individuo, ma alla comunità di un gruppo sociale più esteso, anzi a tutta la comunità umana mondiale. Tale amore si dimostra da quanto il rivoluzionario è pronto a soffrire, dalla natura sublime dei suoi ideali che funzionano nel mondo reale, non in quello illusorio dei personaggi religiosi. E' piuttosto il cristiano che è colpevole di un amore sterile, egoistico, inefficiente e non autentico, insomma di un amore che è, in realtà, una ipocrisia. Quando un rivoluzionario infligge castighi, anche quando egli condanna intere classi di persone, egli dimostra la maggiore misericordia verso tutta l'umanità: E' stata una tragica necessità, ma una necessità che ha delle qualità espiatorie. E' come un'offerta in sacrificio sull'altare della storia. Tale infatti è la via senz'uscita che affrontiamo in ogni nostro confronto con il mondo del comunismo cinese. [52]

Basandosi su un'interpretazione comprensiva della storia e su una visione mitica del suo futuro, l'etica maoista non si lascia dunque giudicare dai criteri morali ordinari. Essa si giustifica da sé. Ma il Berry osserva che la coscienza mitica « ha delle possibilità tanto demoniache quanto divine ». Quindi egli conclude: « Ci vuole il discernimento degli spiriti. Qui sta infatti il punto cruciale della questione » [53].

Così la lettura dei rapporti presentati al seminario preparatorio di Båstad ci conduce alla seguente conclusione. In ultima analisi, il problema dell'evangelizzazione della Cina di oggi si riduce a questa questione: Come i cinesi capiscono la Parola di Dio oggi? Questa questione non riguarda soltanto i cristiani cinesi. Tutta la Chiesa, in modo particolare il suo ceto magisteriale, è interessata nel trovarne una giusta soluzione. Per questo, i seminari internazionali ed ecumenici sulle questioni attinenti, quali quelli di Båstad e di Lovanio, sono davvero utili.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 57.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 58.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 62.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 61.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

Evangelisation im Lichte der Philosophie

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Die Evangelisation oder das Verkünden der Frohbotschaft erwächst aus dem Auftrag Christi und wendet sich an alle Menschen, wie der klassische Text Mt 28, 18-20 zeigt. Obwohl sie demnach dem theologischen Bereich angehört, so hat sie doch auch ihre philosophische Seite gemäß dem Grundsatz, daß die Gnade keineswegs die Natur zerstört, sondern sie voraussetzt und in eine sie überschreitende Ordnung hinein vollendet. Dementsprechend versuchen wir, den menschlichen Voraussetzungen der christlichen Verkündigung nachzugehen; sie sind nicht nur von formaler, sondern auch von materialer Art.

I. ZU DEN FORMALEN VORBEDINGUNGEN

Der Mensch, der durch die Verkündigung angesprochen wird, ist *Person*, die als solche bei ihrem Handeln durch eigene Einsicht und freie Selbstverfügung geleitet wird. Dieser Grundverfassung hat die Verkündigung Rechnung zu tragen, wodurch zunächst zwei Extreme ausgeschlossen sind.

1. Das *eine Extrem* nennen wir die *Vergewaltigung* der Person, wobei diese in ihrer Eigenart verkürzt und in eine gewisse Unmündigkeit hineingedrängt wird, statt in ihrer Mündigkeit ernst genommen, anerkannt und zu deren voller Reife geführt zu werden. Das geschieht in dem Maße, wie die Verkündigung als *Indoktrination* mißverstanden wird; dann schaltet sie die eigene Einsicht des Menschen aus und sucht ihn ohne seine Einsicht und sogar gegen diese zum Glauben zu bringen, indem sie ihm oft auch Vorteile irdischer Art anbietet, die ihn wenigstens zu einem Lippenbekenntnis bewegen. Dabei kommt es nicht

auf die Einsicht in die Glaubensgehalte an, was durch deren Geheimnis-charakter ausgeschlossen ist; vielmehr geht es um die *Einsicht* in jene klaren und schwerwiegenden Gründe, die den Glauben vor der menschlichen Vernunft rechtfertigen und empfehlen und obendrein die ernste Verpflichtung zu Annehmen des Glaubens aufleuchten lassen. Selbstverständlich wird die Verkündigung zu dieser Einsicht auf die Weise anleiten, die dem Alter, der Reife und dem Bildungsstand des Menschen entspricht; und selbst beim Gebildeten muß es nicht eine wissenschaftlich durchreflektierte Einsicht sein, weil deren vorwissenschaftliche, aus der Klärung der Lebenserfahrung erwachsende Gestalt sich als vollgültig erweist und oft sogar für den Einzelnen überzeugender ist. Wie die Verkündigung schon beim Kind erste Anfänge der Einsicht zu erreichen bestrebt ist, so geht sie beim reifenden und reifen Menschen darauf aus, seine Einsicht immer weiter zu vervollkommnen, worin eine nie ans Ende kommende Aufgabe liegt.

Vergewaltigt wird die Person auch und fast noch mehr, wenn ihre *freie Selbstverfügung* nicht be-achtet und ge-achtet, ja sogar miß-achtet oder wenigstens zu leicht genommen wird. In diesem Falle wird der Mensch durch physischen oder moralischen, durch direkten oder indirekten Zwang zum Glauben getrieben, wobei seine Freiheit nicht oder kaum angesprochen und einbezogen, sondern eher zurückgestoßen und als unbequem oder bedeutungslos beiseitegeschoben wird. Theoretisch hat man zwar immer die Freiheit des Gewissens anerkannt, praktisch aber ließ man sie nicht immer so zur Geltung kommen, wie es ihr gebührt; das wird dadurch bestätigt, daß das folgerichtige Eintreten des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils für die unverkürzte *Gewissensfreiheit* allenthalben als ein neuer Durchbruch empfunden wurde. Vorher wurde hie und da die Rangordnung der Maßstäbe verkehrt, indem man das Annehmen des Glaubens über die Verantwortung des Gewissens stellte, obwohl jenes Annehmen unter dieser Verantwortung steht oder jeder das Annehmen des Glaubens vor seinem Gewissen zu verantworten hat. Nach allem ist es für die Verkündigung wesentlich, sich an die freie Selbstverfügung des Menschen zu wenden und mit ihr zu rechnen; dabei wird sie sich dem allmählichen Sich-entfalten der Freiheit anpassen, wodurch die freie Entscheidung den Glauben immer persönlicher und aus immer größerer Tiefe heraus übernimmt.

Das *andere Extrem* nennen wir die *Selbstherrlichkeit* der Person. Während das Vergewaltigen mit dem Personalen der Person unvereinbar ist, widerstreitet die Selbstherrlichkeit zunächst der Endlichkeit der menschlichen Person. Zunächst: zuletzt nämlich würde die völlig bindungslose oder chaotische Selbstherrlichkeit dem Personalen jeder, auch der absoluten Person zuwiderlaufen. Gewiß ist die Person Herr über sich selbst, insofern sie, wie wir sagten, aus ihrer eigenen Einsicht und ihrer freien Selbstverfügung lebt. Von hier aus kommen so manche zu jener Übersteigerung, die alle Verkündigung auf *bloße Information* beschränkt, was auch von der Katechese oder dem Religionsunterricht und von der Predigt gelten soll. Bloße Information bedeutet, daß die Glaubensgehalte dem Menschen einfach vorgelegt werden ohne ausdrückliches Bemühen, ihn dafür zu gewinnen; denn solches Bemühen sieht man als Gefährdung der personalen Eigenständigkeit an, weil es die eigene Einsicht verdrängen und die freie Entscheidung hemmen könnte. Außerdem meint man nicht selten, es derselben Eigenständigkeit schuldig zu sein, daß man neben den christlichen auch die anderen Glaubensgehalte mitteilt, indem man alles offenläßt und diese Art der Verkündigung allein für wahre Objektivität hält. Darin ist aber manchmal nicht nur eine überspannte Achtung vor der Person am Werke, sondern auch der *Indifferentismus*, der allen Weltanschauungen als gleich-wertigen Entwicklungen der Geschichte und damit dem Christentum gleich-gültig gegenübersteht, für den es daher letztlich mehr oder weniger auf dasselbe herauskommt, ob sich einer für das Christentum entscheidet oder nicht.

Das Beschränken der Verkündigung auf bloße Information ist eine Re-aktion auf das oben besprochene Vergewaltigen, die auf ihre Weise ebenso einseitig wie dieses vorangeht. In dem Bestreben, der vom Vergewaltigen verkürzten Person gerecht zu werden, schießt die bloße Information über das Ziel hinaus. Sie rechnet in einem verstiegenen Idealismus nicht genug mit der Endlichkeit und daher mit der Ergänzungsbedürftigkeit der menschlichen, zumal der jugendlichen Person. Deren Eigenart entspricht es, nicht allein gelassen oder sich selbst überlassen zu werden, sondern nach *Entscheidungshilfen* zu verlangen und sie zu benutzen. Wenn die Verkündigung demgemäß über bloße Information hinausgeht, handelt sie nicht gegen die Eigenständig-

keit der Person, sondern nimmt auf deren konkrete Situation Rücksicht; dadurch wird die wahre oder gesunde Eigenständigkeit nicht zerstört, sondern gerade zur Vollendung geführt, während sie ohne solchen Beistand nicht oder wenigstens nicht so schnell und leicht zur Reife käme. Was die Wahl zwischen der christlichen Wahrheit und den anderen Weltanschauungen betrifft, so braucht der Mensch gerade dabei Entscheidungshilfen, damit er nicht hoffnungslos in einem ihn überflutenden Chaos versinkt. Durch das Anbieten solcher Hilfen frevelt die Verkündigung keineswegs gegen die *wahre Objektivität*, die auf diesem Wege vielmehr erst eigentlich erreicht wird; denn nicht der ist objektiv, der alles offenläßt, sondern jener, der die Unterschiede, die nicht wegzudisputieren sind, klar herausstellt, der namentlich die Einzigartigkeit des Christentums nicht verschleiert. Schließlich darf sich die Verkündigung trotz aller Hochschätzung der großen Weltreligionen nicht zu einem relativierenden Gerede verleiten lassen; im Gegenteil soll sie den Absolutheitsanspruch des Christentums mit aller Entschiedenheit herausarbeiten, wozu in der heutigen Glaubenskrise so manchen der Mut gebricht. Doch dient sie dadurch ebenso der wahren Objektivität wie sie auch der Person die Absolutheit eröffnet, die diese zuinnerst erstrebt, was wir noch eingehender zeigen werden. Der tiefsten Eigenart der Person entspricht keineswegs eine mit Relativierung spielende Bindungslosigkeit, sondern die *absolute Bindung*, die freilich weder in Vergewaltigen verkehrt noch dort behauptet werden darf, wo sie nicht vorliegt.

2. Die Auseinandersetzung mit den beiden Extremen hat zu dem Ergebnis geführt, daß die Verkündigung, die weder zur Vergewaltigung noch zur Information entartet, genau mit der eigenen Einsicht und der freien Entscheidung der endlichen menschlichen Person zusammenstimmt. Das wird sich noch deutlicher zeigen, wenn wir nunmehr schärfer umgrenzen sowohl die Personen, zwischen denen sich die Verkündigung abspielt, als auch die Wahrheit, die in der Verkündigung mitgeteilt wird.

Wir setzen bei der *verkündigten Wahrheit* an und ziehen zu deren Erläuterung die zweifache Wahrheit heran, die Kierkegaard in der « Abschließenden unwissenschaftlichen Nachschrift » zu seinen « Philosophischen Brocken » entwickelt. Näherhin stellt er der objektiven Wahrheit die subjektive gegenüber. Die *objektive* Wahrheit betrifft den Wahrheitsgehalt, der

vom Gegenstand oder Objekt empfangen wird. Dieser Gehalt wird vom Menschen in kühler Distanz festgestellt oder konstatiert und ohne eigene Beteiligung registriert. Einem solchen Gehalt entspricht keine Ergriffenheit oder Überwältigung; er nimmt den Menschen nicht in Anspruch und bewirkt deshalb auch keine Verwandlung. Trotz der Kenntnisnahme steht die Wahrheit als etwas Anderes dem Menschen getrennt und fremd gegenüber in der Subjekt-Objekt-Spaltung. — Im Gegensatz dazu ist die *subjektive* Wahrheit dasselbe wie die Wahrheitshaltung, mit der der Mensch als Subjekt den Wahrheitsgehalt umfaßt. Hier tritt an die Stelle des kühl distanzierten Konstatierens die innere Beteiligung oder das leidenschaftliche Aufnehmen und Annehmen. Ergriffen und überwältigt, wird der Mensch mitgerissen, eignet er sich den Gehalt an und stellt er sich seinem Anspruch, wodurch die Angleichung an den Gehalt und die Verwandlung des Menschen in Gang kommt. Damit wird die Subjekt-Objekt-Spaltung überwunden, die Wahrheit wird mit dem Menschen eins und verwächst so sehr mit ihm, daß er die Wahrheit *ist*. Während für die nur objektive Wahrheit kaum jemand zu sterben imstande ist, verleiht die subjektive Wahrheit folgerichtig die Bereitschaft zum Martyrium, weil man sie nur dadurch zum Schweigen bringen kann, daß man den Menschen, der ihr Träger ist, auslöscht.

Die beiden Gestalten der Wahrheit *gehören zusammen* und schließen nur in ihren extremen Ausprägungen einander aus, wobei sie aber auch sich selbst zerstören. Eine objektive Wahrheit ohne jede subjektive, also ohne jede Beteiligung oder ohne jedes Interesse von seiten des Menschen, hat für diesen keinerlei Bedeutung, weshalb er sich auf die Dauer nicht mehr damit befassen wird und sie dadurch aufhört, für ihn Wahrheit zu sein. Umgekehrt verhält es sich mit der subjektiven Wahrheit ohne jede objektive, also mit der leidenschaftlichen Ergriffenheit ohne ergreifenden Gehalt; sie entartet zur bloßen Meinung, die keine Wahrheit mehr ist und dem Subjektivismus gleichkommt, wodurch allmählich auch die Ergriffenheit sich entweder in blindem Fanatismus verliert oder wegen ihrer Leere verblaßt und schließlich erlischt. Demzufolge ist in der objektiven Wahrheit immer etwas von der subjektiven, wenigstens ein Interesse zu wissen, am Werke, wie auch in der subjektiven Wahrheit stets eine objektive oder ein Gehalt angeeignet wird.

Trotz ihrer Durchdringung sind der objektive und der subjektive Aspekt der Wahrheit oft auf *verschiedene Weise akzentuiert*. Einerseits kann die *objektive* Wahrheit so sehr hervortreten, daß die subjektive oder die persönliche Aneignung ganz im Hintergrund bleibt. Eine solche Wahrheit läßt sich ohne weiteres vom Einzelnen lösen, auf einen andern übertragen und von ihm nachvollziehen; sie wird durch Beobachtung, Experiment und mathematische Berechnung verifiziert oder gerechtfertigt, wobei der persönliche Einsatz des Einzelnen und seine Lebenserfahrung keine Rolle spielen. Gewissen Bereichen ist diese Art von Wahrheit genau angemessen, was vor allem auf die *Naturwissenschaft* zutrifft, die sich in der bloßen Information erschöpft. Hier geht es um jene Bereiche, die nicht die zentralen Anliegen des Menschen berühren; insoweit aber diese Anliegen in solche Bereiche hineinreichen, bricht in der objektiven Wahrheit auch die subjektive durch, was etwa die Ergebnisse der Krebsforschung oder der Atomenergienutzung zeigen. — Heute besteht die Neigung, die eben beschriebene Art von Wahrheit als die *allein maßgebende* anzusehen und sie deshalb auch für andere Bereiche zu fordern; und wenn diese einer derartigen Anforderung nicht entsprechen, streitet man ihnen überhaupt jede Wahrheit ab und verweist sie in das Reich der unbegründeten und unbegründbaren Träume. Das hat seine bedenklichen Folgen für die Verkündigung, die man entweder dieser Weise der Wahrheit anzugleichen versucht oder als unwissenschaftlich verwirft.

Andrerseits kann die *subjektive* Wahrheit so sehr hervortreten oder entscheidende Bedeutung gewinnen, daß die objektive Wahrheit oder der Wahrheitsgehalt einzig in der persönlichen Aneignung nach seiner unverkürzten Fülle und seinem ganzen Gewicht zugänglich wird; erst wer sich mit all seiner Hingabe darauf einläßt, erfährt wahrhaft, worum es eigentlich geht. Eine solche Wahrheit ist mit dem Einzelnen verwachsen und läßt sich daher nicht ohne weiteres von ihm ablösen; ein anderer kann sie nicht einfach übernehmen und nachvollziehen. Trotz des die Einzelnen überschreitenden und verbindenden Gehaltes weist sie vermöge der Aneignung ein je individuelles Gepräge auf; deshalb ist sie vom Einzelnen aus seinem eigenen Ursprung jedesmal neu zu gewinnen, wenn auch die Anregung durch die anderen und die Kommunikation mit den anderen hilfreich sind. Beim Verifizieren oder Rechtfertigen der in diesem Sinne subjektiven

Wahrheit spielen gewiß objektive Gründe eine unentbehrliche Rolle; doch erreichen sie allein durch die Verbindung mit der Lebenserfahrung und dem persönlichen Einsatz des Einzelnen ihre volle Kraft; sie werden erst dann nicht nur theoretisch eingesehen, sondern auch praktisch wirksam, wenn sich einer dafür öffnet und bereitet. Wie man leicht sehen wird, erschöpft sich die so charakterisierte Wahrheit nicht in bloßer Information, weil sie nicht nur den registrierenden Verstand, sondern den ganzen Menschen mit seinen sämtlichen Fähigkeiten und bis in seine innerste Mitte oder bis in sein Herz anspricht: « Das Herz hat seine Gründe, die der Verstand nicht kennt » (Pascal). Diese Wahrheit ist genau jenen Bereichen angemessen, die es mit den *zentralen Anliegen* des Menschen zu tun haben, besonders mit dem Sinn seines Daseins, mit seinem Heil oder seiner ewigen Bestimmung; ihnen kann der Mensch nicht kühl distanziert gegenüberstehen, von ihnen wird er bis in seine Herzenstiefe bewegt, sobald sie ihn so treffen, wie sie sind. Dazu gehören der *religiöse Bereich* und vor allem die christliche Verkündigung, der also nur die subjektive Wahrheit entspricht und die durch die bloß objektive Wahrheit sofort als Wahrheit verdünnt und verharmlost und damit aus der Zone der zentralen Anliegen hinausgedrängt wird. Als Folge davon beobachten wir, wie die Menschen mit der Verkündigung ähnlich wie mit anderen belanglosen Mitteilungen umgehen, nur mit halben Herzen hinhören oder gar überhaupt nicht darauf achten, wie sie ihren Glauben wegwerfen, ohne darunter zu leiden, wie andere Dinge (Genuß, Lebensstandard, Politik, Ideologien) ihre Leidenschaft ganz in Anspruch nehmen und für die Verkündigung keinen Platz und keine Kraft mehr lassen.

3. Das über die verkündigte Wahrheit Gesagte hat uns darauf vorbereitet, im folgenden *die Personen* ins Auge zu fassen, *zwischen denen* die Verkündigung spielt, also den, von dem die Verkündigung ausgeht, und den, der die Verkündigung empfängt.

Zwischen diesen beidem entfaltet sich der Vorgang der *Verkündigung* als eine Art von *Dialog*, in dem sich der eine vorwiegend aktiv, der andere hingegen vorwiegend passiv verhält, wobei jedoch immer wieder zugleich das umgekehrte Verhalten mitwirkt. Nun ist ein wahrer Dialog nicht ein leeres Gerede, nicht eine belanglose Unterhaltung, nicht eine wissenschaftliche, einzig von der Sache beherrschte und auf logische Schärfe abzie-

lende Diskussion, sondern eine *menschliche Begegnung*. Hier zeichnen sich sogleich Fehlgestalten der Verkündigung ab; nicht selten entartet sie zu einem leeren Gerede oder auch zu einer belanglosen Unterhaltung, wodurch auch die verkündete Wahrheit mit Leere und Belanglosigkeit belastet und so verdunkelt wird; auch eine wissenschaftliche Diskussion genügt nicht, weil sie allein den Verstand anspricht und das Herz kaltläßt. Eine menschliche Begegnung hingegen vermag nicht nur einen Einzelnen zu gewinnen, sondern auch eine Gruppe oder eine Gemeinde in ihren Bann zu schlagen, wie sich gerade beim Gelingen der Verkündigung zeigt. Wenn sich die Verkündigung als eine solche Begegnung vollzieht, findet gewiß die Mitteilung des Wahrheitsgehaltes statt; doch springt zugleich ein Funke von Mensch zu Mensch über oder entzündet sich Leben an Leben. Der Verkünder ist Zeuge oder gibt *Zeugnis* von seinem eigenen Glauben, wodurch er kraft einer wahren Vaterschaft den Glauben in dem Empfangenden *zeugt* oder erzeugt (vgl. Rom 1, 12). Freilich handelt es sich hier nicht um einen biologischen Vorgang, sondern um ein *personales* Geschehen, das nach Ausschließen alles Vergewaltigens die Eigenart der Person nach ihrem vollen Gewicht ins Spiel zu bringen hat. Daß die Person ganz zur Auswirkung kommt, ist keineswegs selbstverständlich, weil sie sich wegen ihrer Freiheit entweder fortschreitend personal ausprägen oder nach der Art des Impersonalen dahintreiben lassen kann; personale Reife fällt ihr nicht von selbst in den Schoß, sondern ist Frucht eines lebenslangen Ringens.

Dazu ist zunächst der *aktive Träger* der Verkündigung aufgerufen; wenn er diese Aufgabe nicht ernst nimmt, geht keine Kraft von ihm aus, vermag er nicht die Freiheit der anderen zu gewinnen, ohne sie zu vergewaltigen. Hier zeigt sich eine der Wurzeln, aus der die oben beschriebenen Extreme wuchern; wem die innere Kraft zum Bewegen der anderen mangelt, wird sie einerseits durch die äußere Gewalt und die ihr entsprechenden Mittel ersetzen oder andrerseits alles laufenlassen, wobei ihm die zu achtende Eigenständigkeit der Person einen erwünschten Vorwand liefert. Die erforderliche innere Kraft verleiht aber dem Verkündiger nicht die nur objektive Wahrheit im Sinne eines noch so verfeinerten Wissens; vielmehr erwächst sie zuinnerst allein aus der subjektiven Wahrheit, also daraus, daß er sich die Frohbotschaft immer mehr *personal aneignet* und so

mit seiner ganzen Person oder Freiheit für sie einsteht. Mit dem, was er verkündet, einsgeworden oder verwachsen, ist er davon bis in seinen Kern geprägt, weshalb in seiner Person das Verkündete selbst leibhaftig den Menschen entgegentritt und sie überwältigt, nicht aber vergewaltigt. Anders ausgedrückt: indem vermöge der personalen Aneignung der Verkünder vom Verkündeten durchleuchtet wird, leuchtet in seiner Person die Botschaft auf. Der Mensch drängt sich nicht vor, sondern tritt hinter dem Wort zurück, das zur Sprache kommt, indem er sich ihm ganz zur Verfügung stellt; das Wort braucht den Menschen nicht und will ihn doch brauchen. Die innere Kraft geht also nicht vom Menschen, sondern von dem mit ihm *geeinten Wort* aus, dessen bloßer Vermittler er ist.

Die Botschaft, die in der christlichen Verkündigung uns anspricht, hat ihren Ursprung nicht im Menschen selbst, sondern in Gott: sie ist das Wort Gottes. Je inniger daher der Verkünder mit diesem Wort verwächst, desto tiefer wird er *mit Gott eins,* desto mehr wird Gott in ihm mächtig und spricht er durch ihn. Demnach ist die innere Kraft, die in der Verkündigung die Menschen überwältigt, ohne sie zu vergewaltigen, letztlich die Kraft Gottes selbst, die mittels der Botschaft im verkündenden Menschen wirksam wird. Wer also wahrhaft verkündigen will, muß sich mittels der Botschaft ganz Gott zur Verfügung stellen oder für ihn durchlässig werden, und zwar in Christus, dem Zeugen ohne gleichen, der aus dem schöpft, was er selbst im Schoß des ewigen Vaters geschaut hat (Joh 1, 18).

Ihre höchste Eindringlichkeit wird der Verkündigung durch das und in dem *Martyrium* zuteil; dabei besiegelt einer, der verkündet, sein Zeugnis mit seinem Blut und Leben. So kommt zum Vorschein, was wir bereits bei der Klärung der subjektiven Wahrheit gesagt haben; ein solcher ist mit seiner Botschaft bis ins letzte verwachsen, so daß man diese einzig dadurch zum Schweigen bringen kann, daß man ihn tötet; einem solchen ist es mit seinem Zeugnis ganz ernst, da er ja das Äußerste dafür einzusetzen und alles dafür zu opfern bereit ist: ein solcher Zeuge über-zeugt.

Hier wird vielleicht mancher fragen, ob einer, der in der beschriebenen Weise für die Verkündigung verbraucht wird, ja in seinem Zeugnis verschwindet, sich darin als Person vollende. Darauf ist mit einem klaren Ja zu antworten; denn einer, der

verkündet, wird weder vom Wort Gottes noch von Gott selbst vergewaltigt oder in seiner Freiheit verkürzt; vielmehr trifft ihn ein Angebot, das sich gerade an seine Freiheit wendet, das er deshalb nicht nur annehmen, sondern auch ablehnen kann. Wenn er es aber annimmt, betritt er damit einen Weg, auf dem er gegen zahllose Widerstände den immer neuen und äußersten *Einsatz seiner Freiheit* zu leisten hat. Daher ist in der inneren Kraft der Verkündigung zusammen mit der Kraft der Botschaft und Gottes selbst die Kraft des als Person ausgereiften Menschen am Werke. Das ist ein In-eins-fall, der den aktiven Träger der Verkündigung kennzeichnet und der Verkündigung selbst ihre volle Wirksamkeit verleiht.

Blicken wir nun auf den, der die *Verkündigung empfängt.* Diese ist verfehlt, wenn sie den Empfänger vergewaltigt und damit in die Passivität hineindrängt; denn in diesem Falle findet keine menschliche Begegnung statt und wird das Personzentrum nicht getroffen. Weil alles äußerlich bleibt, kommt es weder zur Einsicht in die Botschaft noch zu deren freiem Bejahen. Je ehrlicher wir zugeben müssen, daß die Evangelisation in nicht wenigen Fällen auf dieser Stufe stehenblieb, desto entschiedener gilt es zu betonen, daß sie erst dann echt geschieht, wenn sie die Aktivität der Menschen oder deren *eigene Initiative* weckt. Das wird jedoch nur ganz ungenügend erreicht, solange allein das Wissen berührt und die Botschaft lediglich im Sinne der objektiven Wahrheit gelernt wird; denn diese Stufe überwindet noch nicht die kühle Distanz des Unbeteiligten, an der die Verkündigung nur allzu oft scheitert. Sie gelingt erst und allein dann, wenn sie den ganzen Menschen anspricht oder die Person in ihre Mitte trifft und damit zu ihrem personalen Tun anregt; das ist mit der subjektiven oder *personal angeeigneten* Wahrheit gleichbedeutend, die durch innere Assimilation den Menschen wandelt und so wahrhaft zum Christen macht. Um zu dieser ihrer Erfüllung zu gelangen, wird die Verkündigung gewiß all jene Mittel anwenden, die von der psychologisch-pädagogischen und katechetisch-homiletischen Forschung entwickelt werden. Doch trägt mehr als all Derartiges dazu der Verkünder bei, dessen Bild wir entworfen haben; er ist jener Feuerbrand, von dem der Funke überspringt; er entfaltet jene Lebensfülle, die in anderen Leben zu zeugen vermag. Bei diesem Geschehen wird sich der Verkündende der Eigenart dessen angleichen, dem er

die Botschaft bringt, und daher um so mehr zurücktreten, je reifer der andere geworden ist und selbst die Verkündigung übernimmt.

In den Auseinandersetzungen unserer Tage wird oft der Einwand erhoben, durch die christliche Verkündigung werde der Mensch sich selbst *entfremdet.* Das kann sich einmal auf das Daß und das Wie der Verkündigung und dann auf deren Inhalt beziehen. *Daß* überhaupt Verkündigung geschieht, hat seine Wurzel in der dialogischen Struktur des menschlichen Daseins, vermöge deren jeder von den anderen empfängt und keiner alles aus sich selbst allein schöpft. Wenn er also gerade durch die anderen zu sich selbst geführt wird, kann nicht das Daß, sondern nur das *Wie* der Verkündigung unter den Verdacht, sie erzeuge Entfremdung, geraten. Doch auch dieser Verdacht ist bereits ausgeräumt, insofern nur die Fehlformen der Verkündigung Entfremdung mit sich bringen, während deren echte Gestalt vermöge der subjektiven Wahrheit gerade zum *Selbst-werden* der Person beiträgt. In der Tat regt die Verkündigung den Menschen zum Entfalten seines personalen Einsatzes und damit zum Verwirklichen seiner Personalität an; dabei gelangt er, statt in allgemeine Schemata gepresst zu werden, zu seiner Individualität; er wird ganz als er selbst ausgeprägt, indem er sich das Verkündete an-eignet; auch läßt er zugleich die Abhängigkeit des Unmündigen hinter sich, indem er in seinen Eigenstand mit der ihr entsprechenden Kommunikation hineinreift, wodurch der Empfangende selbst zum Gebenden wird. Nachdem also beim Daß und Wie der Verkündigung keine Rede von Entfremdung sein kann, ist sie höchstens bei deren *Inhalt* zu finden; damit aber werden wir zum zweiten Teil unserer Darlegungen hinübergeleitet.

II. Zu den materialen Vorbedingungen

Ihrem Inhalt nach bringt die christliche Verkündigung den Menschen mit Gott in Beziehung, und zwar auf die ganz bestimmte Art, die durch die Geheimnisse des Glaubens eröffnet wird. Von hier aus gesehen, vermag die Philosophie einen Dienst an der Verkündigung zu leisten, indem sie, soweit es in ihren Kräften steht, den auf den Inhalt der Verkündigung gerichteten

Einwand der Entfremdung auflöst und so dem Aneignen dieses Inhaltes Wege bereitet. Das soll in drei Stufen versucht werden.

1. Der *Atheismus* als das ausdrückliche Sich-lossagen von Gott hat heute bei so vielen Menschen Eingang gefunden wie noch in keiner Epoche der Geschichte. Man erklärt, Gott sei eine Fiktion und der Mensch könne sich erst dann verwirklichen, wenn er sich auf sich selbst stelle. Man brauche Gott nicht mehr als Lückenbüßer, weil der Mensch selbst mit Hilfe seiner modernen Errungenschaften alle Lücken schließen könne; man sei nicht mehr auf die Hypothese ' Gott ' angewiesen, seit der Mensch mit seinen eigenen Kräften für alles aufzukommen imstande sei, wie Naturwissenschaft und Technik zeigen. Ein solches geistiges Klima ist der christlichen Verkündigung wenig günstig, weshalb sie nicht mehr ankommt und auch in den Herzen jener zerfällt, in denen sie bereits Wurzeln geschlagen hatte. Was die Philosophie betrifft, so beschränkt man sie auf den innerweltlichen Bereich, indem man ihr den Zugang zum Transzendenten abspricht und dieses selbst in eine Illusion verflüchtigt.

Dabei beruft man sich auf Kant, aber zu Unrecht. Obwohl er nämlich die Erkenntnis auf den Bereich möglicher Erfahrung einengt, tritt er mit aller Entschiedenheit für die Ausrichtung des Menschen auf das « Unbedingte » ein und bahnt er auch, wenigstens auf die Weise des sittlichen Glaubens, den *Zugang zu Gott*. Derselbe Zugang ist, wie gegen Kant herauszuarbeiten ist, ebenso auf die Weise des Wissens möglich, das sich freilich über die bloße Logik hinaus als gesamtmenschlich-personaler Aufschwung entfaltet. Darin wird das Seiende immer schon auf das es umfassende und gründende Sein hin oder das Relative auf das Absolute hin transparent, wofür Heidegger wichtige Hinweise gibt, ohne selbst den hier sich öffnenden Weg zu Ende zu gehen. Wie die Blindheit gegenüber dieser *Transparenz*, deren Übersehen und Vergessen, mindestens deren Nicht-beachten und Nicht-auswerten zum Atheismus führt und ihn erklärt, so geleitet die treue, behutsame und beharrliche Hingabe an das im Vordergründigen jederzeit sich meldende Hintergründige schließlich vor das Antlitz Gottes. Auf diesem Weg richtet die Naturwissenschaft keineswegs ein unüberwindliches Hindernis auf; denn ihre Methoden sehen zwar von Gott ab, liefern aber nie einen Beweis gegen ihn, weil sie für das, was die Erfahrungswelt übersteigt, nicht zuständig sind. Damit ist das Wissen von Gott nicht empirisch verifizierbar; doch kommt ihm jene Verifizierbarkeit zu, die wir die transzendentale nennen und die an Strenge alle anderen Weisen übertrifft, was hier nicht genauer dargetan werden kann.

Wie aus unseren wenigen Andeutungen hervorgeht, vermag die Philosophie das Ackerfeld für den Samen der Verkündigung insoweit zu bereiten, als sie den in die Immanenz verschlossenen Menschen auf den zu der Transzendenz offenen Menschen hin überwindet. Zugleich macht sie deutlich, wie der Mensch durch Gott mit sich selbst vermittelt ist und daher einzig durch die *Einigung mit Gott er selbst* sein kann oder nur in Gott sich selbst, sein eigentliches und tiefstes Selbst findet. Demnach kann er, auf seine innersten Anliegen geschaut, keineswegs für alles allein aufkommen, ist er noch wesentlicher als der Fisch auf das Wasser auf Gott angewiesen und wird er gerade durch die Trennung von Gott sich selbst entfremdet. So trägt die Philosophie zu einem der christlichen Verkündigung günstigen Klima bei.

Wie ist es möglich, daß sich der Mensch im Sinne der atheistischen Selbstbehauptung mißversteht? Woher kommt es, daß er immer wieder verfehlt, was und wer er zuinnerst ist? Der Philosoph Jaspers antwortet darauf, es sei, als ob wir aus der Wahrheit herausgefallen wären, als ob somit eine *Verkehrtheit* in den Grund unseres Daseins eingebrochen sei. Wie auch Heidegger feststellt, treibt sich der Mensch zunächst und zumeist in der Uneigentlichkeit seiner selbst herum, aus der er sich nur mühsam zu dem, der er eigentlich ist, emporzuringen vermag. Auf ähnliche Weise bezeugen andere Denker die Verlorenheit des Menschen und die Sinnlosigkeit seines Lebens und Sterbens, allerdings oft so, daß sie jeden Ausweg aus dieser Situation abstreiten und sich einer letzten Verzweiflung ausliefern, wie das bei Sartre der Fall ist. Diese Einsichten sind wiederum eine Hilfe für die Verkündigung, insofern sie den Boden für den Glauben an die Ur- und *Erbsünde* bereiten. Zugleich zeigen sie, wie der Mensch nicht sich selbst erlösen kann und der Verzweiflung verfällt, wenn ihm nicht von anderswoher eine *Hoffnung* leuchtet.

2. Näherhin ist die Beziehung zu Gott, die uns die Verkündigung eröffnet, durch *Geheimnisse* gekennzeichnet. Nun mündet bereits ein Philosophieren, das nicht durch ein rationalistisches Alles-begreifen-wollen in die Irre geleitet wird, in die Sphäre des Geheimnisses ein. Namentlich Marcel hat herausgearbeitet, wie

alle Probleme, die am endlichen Seienden aufbrechen, in dem Geheimnis gründen, als das sich uns das letztlich unendliche Sein mitteilt. Unser Begreifen, das schon die Probleme nie erschöpfend lösen kann, wird vollends vom Geheimnis überschritten, das gerade als das *Unbegreifliche* begriffen wird. So kommt uns nach Thomas von Aquin im Bezug auf Gott ein nicht-wissendes Wissen zu, das von jenem Dunkel umfangen ist, in dem wir am tiefsten mit Gott verbunden sind. Indem unser Geist Geheimnissen begegnet, wird er also nicht sich selbst entfremdet, sondern gerade zu der ihm als endlichem Geist höchstmöglichen Vollendung erhoben. Gewiß ist das Geheimnis in der Philosophie noch nicht dasselbe wie das der Theologie und der Verkündigung; doch werden wir durch jenes auf dieses vorbereitet, insofern wir darin eingeübt werden, daß wir es überhaupt mit geheimnisvoll Unbegreiflichem zu tun haben. Auch legt uns die unbegreifliche Geheimnistiefe, als die sich Gott schon für die Philosophie zeigt, vielleicht die Vermutung nahe, daß es in Gott weitere verborgene Zonen gibt, zu denen uns allein Offenbarung und Glaube einen Zugang zu gewähren vermögen.

Die Geheimnisse, die uns die Verkündigung erschließt, stammen aus Gottes *offenbarendem Wort.* Auf das Wort eines Sprechenden zu hören und dadurch etwas zu vernehmen, das uns sonst verschlossen bliebe, sind wir aus unserem Alltag gewohnt. In derartige Erfahrungen führt uns die Philosophie tiefer ein, indem sie uns die einzigartige Struktur des personalen Dialogs nahebringt. Dabei öffnen sich zwei Personen zueinander hin und lassen einander an dem teilhaben, was in ihnen verborgen lebt, und mit dem sie allein jenen beglücken, dem sie das entsprechende liebende Vertrauen schenken. Auf diesem Hintergrund führt uns dieselbe Philosophie zu dem Wort hin, das Gott ohne Unterlaß *durch seine Geschöpfe* an uns richtet; sie lehrt uns, in allem ein Gleichnis, eine Spur oder ein Ebenbild Gottes zu schauen und so einen Strahl aus seiner verborgenen Geheimnistiefe zu empfangen; hierin läßt sie sich nicht durch jene beirren, die wegen ihrer getrübten Sicht behaupten, die Welt sei heute durch die Wissenschaft entzaubert und habe uns von Gott nichts mehr zu sagen. Obendrein läßt uns die Philosophie bedenken, daß die Person nicht auf einen Weg der Mitteilung festgelegt ist, sondern vermöge ihrer liebenden Gebefreudigkeit immer neue Wege ersinnt, um sich und ihre Geheimnisse noch besser

und tiefer mitteilen zu können. So bringt jene uns auch auf den Gedanken, selbst Gott wolle vielleicht nicht nur mittelbar oder durch seine Geschöpfe uns ansprechen, sondern hinter diesen hervortreten und *unmittelbar* sein Wort an uns richten, also sich in jenem Geschehen uns zuneigen, das wir *Offenbarung* nennen. In seiner Einführung in die Religionsphilosophie entwickelt K. Rahner als höchste Aufgabe der Philosophie, daß sie den Menschen zum « Hörer des Wortes » erhebe; danach soll sie ihn anleiten, mit einer etwa ergangenen Offenbarung Gottes ernstlich zu rechnen und mit allen Mitteln zu prüfen, ob diese tatsächlich ergangen ist. Einem dergestalt durch die Philosophie auf Offenbarung eingestellten Menschen wird es weniger oder gar keine Schwierigkeiten bieten, sich der ihm begegnenden Verkündigung zu öffnen; denn er wird spüren, wie diese nicht seinem Menschentum widerstreitet, sondern dieses in ganz neue, vom Menschen allein aus unbetretbare Räume der Vollendung geleitet.

Daß wir in der Welt überhaupt eine die Vernunft des Menschen ergänzende Verkündigung antreffen, hat seinen Grund darin, daß sie uns Geheimnisse mitteilt, zu denen erst und allein die Offenbarung den Zugang öffnet. Unsere Vernunft ist aus ihrer eigenen Einsicht nicht imstande, mit Sicherheit das Bestehen solcher Geheimnisse auszumachen und auch sie, nachdem sie ihr bekannt geworden sind, in ihrer inneren Notwendigkeit zu begreifen. Daher entspricht ihnen *der Glaube,* der sich dem offenbarenden Gott angelobt und auf sein Wort hin den geoffenbarten Gehalt bejaht. Zugegebenermaßen liegt in der Aufforderung so zu glauben eine Zumutung an den Menschen, die man in die Worte gefaßt hat: « Du heißt mich mein einziges Licht auslöschen und es wiederentzünden an der Finsternis der Nacht » (Le Fort). Dagegen hat sich der Mensch immer wieder aufgelehnt und empört sich vor allem der auf seine alles einsehende Wissenschaft stolze Mensch unserer Tage; man versteigt sich zu der Behauptung, derartige Geheimnisse seien nicht frei von *Widersprüchen* und obendrein *ohne jeden Nutzen* für das Leben des Menschen. In dieser Hinsicht leistet die Philosophie einen wichtigen Dienst an der Verkündigung, indem sie durch ihre Denkmittel der Theologie bei dem Aufweis hilft, daß von Widersprüchen in jenen Geheimnissen keine Rede sein kann. Zugleich bietet das von der Philosophie entworfene Menschenbild

Ansatzpunkte, von denen her die Theologie und die Verkündigung zu entwickeln vermögen, wie der Mensch durch jene Geheimnisse nicht sich selbst entfremdet, sondern über die ihm von sich aus zukommenden Möglichkeiten hinaus vollendet wird, wie ihm namentlich neue Räume der Wahrheit und neue Entfaltungen des Lebens eröffnet werden. Schließlich zieht die Philosophie aus dem bisher Dargelegten eine Folgerung auch für den Anruf des Gewissens; dieser legt dem Menschen die absolute Verpflichtung auf, sich mit der Verkündigung, die ihm Offenbarungsgeheimnisse darbietet, ernstlich auseinanderzusetzen sowie die darin aufgewiesenen Wege in seinem Denken und Leben zu beschreiten.

3. Das zentrale Geheimnis der christlichen Verkündigung ist die *Menschwerdung* samt der darin eingeschlossenen Erlösung. An diesem Beispiel sei kurz erläutert, wie auch umgekehrt von der Verkündigung ein Beistand für die Philosophie ausgehen kann. Wir haben angedeutet, daß der Mensch einzig durch seine Gründung in Gott er selbst sein kann, diese Gründung aber im philosophischen Ringen immer wieder bedroht ist. Nun zeigt die Menschwerdung den ganz und endgültig in Gott *gegründeten*, ja von der Herrlichkeit Gottes *erfüllten* Menschen, und zwar so, daß das, was an Jesus dem Christus, vor allem in seiner Auferstehung, ein für alle Mal vollendet geschehen ist, auf alle Menschen überstrahlt. Daher wird ihnen in Christus auf eine alles nur Menschliche übersteigende Weise die Möglichkeit geboten, den Zugang zu Gott zu gewinnen und in eine immer innigere Einigung mit ihm hineinzuwachsen. Hierin ist von der Auferstehung Christi her als Ziel der ebenfalls auferstandene Mensch vorgezeichnet, in dessen menschlicher Erscheinung der große Glanz des ihm verliehenen göttlichen Lebens durchbricht. Der Weg zur Vollendung, der sich so öffnet, bewahrt den Menschen vor dem Absturz in die ihn zerstörenden Extreme, nämlich vor der Anmaßung des *Pantheismus*, der den Menschen selbst zu Gott macht, und vor der Verzweiflung des *Atheismus*, der ihm seinen Gott raubt und ihn auf sich selbst zurückwirft. Von der Verkündigung her wird damit dem philosophierenden Menschen der Ausblick auf seine einzigartige Würde und unvergleichliche Kostbarkeit offengehalten. Zugleich wird in ihm die Zuversicht, ihr gemäß zu leben, gestärkt, indem der Mensch nicht mit seiner eigenen Anstrengung alleingelassen, sondern auf den

Weg der Erlösung durch die Gnade Christi gestellt wird. In dem Maße, wie die Verkündigung den Dienst an der Philosophie leistet, daß diese sich ohne Verkürzung und Abirrung entfalten kann, empfängt auch jene von einer solchen Philosophie rückwirkend die für sie entscheidende Wegbereitung in den Menschen.

4. Blicken wir noch ausdrücklich auf die Evangelisation als Verkündigung der Frohbotschaft bei *fremden Völkern*, so zeigt uns die Philosophie in dieser Hinsicht, daß alle Menschen zuinnerst gleich sind. Namentlich sind alle für Gottes Anruf offen und damit auch für sein offenbarendes Wort empfänglich, regt sich entsprechend auch in allen die Forderung des Gewissens, ein solches Wort, sobald es zu ihnen dringt, anzunehmen und danach ihr Leben zu gestalten. An dieser *Grundstruktur* ändert sich letztlich nichts dadurch, daß sie in so und so vielen durch anderes überlagert und verdeckt wird, etwa seit alters durch die großen Weltreligionen oder in unseren Tagen durch oft mit Gewalt aufgezwungene Ideologien; diese dringen allzu sehr auch in bisher christliche Räume ein, wobei ihnen die christliche Verkündigung nicht selten wie schal gewordenes Salz nicht hinreichend Widerstandskraft entgegenzusetzen hat. Dem für die Verkündigung hemmenden Einfluß solcher *Überlagerungen* vermag die Philosophie entgegenzuwirken, indem sie unermüdlich auf die Grundstruktur hinweist, sie immer deutlicher herausarbeitet und so immer machtvoller zur Geltung bringt.

Die eben besprochene Grundstruktur kommt allen Menschen auf diese oder jene Weise in der Erfahrung ihres Lebens zum Bewußtsein, wodurch sie eine Art von vorwissenschaftlicher Philosophie gewinnen. An sie knüpft die wissenschaftliche Philosophie an, die das Vorgefundene durchgliedert, weiter entfaltet und durch zuverlässige Beweisgründe unterbaut. Auf diesem Wege bildet sich ein philosophisches *Grundbewußtsein*, das als gemeinsamer Bestand die Glieder desselben Volkes, die verschiedenen Völker und Kontinente und damit die ganze Menschheit verbindet, und zwar nicht nur in der Gegenwart, sondern auch durch die Jahrtausende. In dem hier gemeinten Grundbewußtsein treffen und verstehen sich die Menschen untereinander, wenn es auch zu allen Zeiten durch Einseitigkeiten und Irrtümer verdunkelt wird und besonders heute wegen tiefgreifender Zerrissenheiten manchmal wie ausgelöscht erscheint. Was nun die

Verkündigung betrifft, so kann sie bei den nicht-christlichen Menschen nicht mit der Hl. Schrift beginnen, weil deren Autorität für sie noch nicht einleuchtet und oft auch durch ihre eigenen religiösen Schriften (wie in Indien) verdrängt wird. Dagegen bietet das *gemeinsame* Grundbewußtsein, sei es wissenschaftlich geläutert oder nicht, für die Verkündigung eine kostbare Grundlage und geeignete Ausgangspunkte ihrer Darlegungen. Mehr denn je bewegen sich heute die geistigen Auseinandersetzungen auf diesem Vorfeld, weshalb auch die Verkündigung dieses bereiten und oft erst von Unkraut reinigen muß, bevor sie das eigentlich Christliche fruchtbar vorzutragen vermag.

Mit dem gemeinsamen Grundbewußtsein sind stets dessen *geschichtliche Besonderungen* zu beachten, in denen es sich vielgestaltig ausprägt und von denen es sich nie in eine völlige Einerleiheit abzulösen imstande ist. Die Fülle solcher Abwandlungen bringt erst den ganzen Reichtum des Gemeinsamen zum Aufleuchten und verleiht ihm eine anziehende, ja überwältigende Gliederung. Auf die damit gegebene Schwingungsbreite muß die Verkündigung eingehen, um den Menschen wahrhaft an dem Standort zu erreichen, wo er sich befindet. In dieser Hinsicht empfängt sie von der Philosophie, insofern diese die Geschichtlichkeit des menschlichen Daseins entwickelt, die verschiedenen Ausgestaltungen des Grundbestandes nach deren Eigenart erfaßt und so die Richtung aufzeigt, in der sich die *Anpassung* der Verkündigung zu bewegen hat. Daraus erwachsen immer wieder andere Ausprägungen, in denen sich auch die Verkündigung selbst, ohne ihre wesentliche Einheit zu verlieren, nach ihrem vollen Gehalt und all ihren Seiten auslegt. Gerade vom Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil her scheint sich diesbezüglich, vorbereitet durch das Einführen der Volkssprachen, eine neue Entwicklung anzubahnen, wobei die abendländische Gestalt der Verkündigung durch andere ihr gleichgeordnete und sie unabsehbar bereichernde ergänzt wird. Ein Vorspiel dazu bietet schon immer das Eigenleben der orientalischen Kirchen gegenüber der lateinischen.

Abschließend fassen wir die *Versuchung* ins Auge, die der Philosophie jederzeit innewohnt, nämlich sich selbst zur *einzigen* Quelle der *Wahrheit* zu machen und deshalb jede andere Wahrheit entweder zu verwerfen oder sie in die eigene Wahrheit umzudeuten und so aufzusaugen. Dieser seiner Versuchung ist das Philosophieren namentlich bezüglich der christlichen Verkündigung immer wieder erlegen. Daher ist bei der geschilderten Zusammenarbeit zwischen beiden stets die *Eigenständigkeit* der Verkündigung, aber auch die der Philosophie zu wahren; übrigens hätte ein Verwischen beiden ineinander zur Folge, daß sie einander nichts zu geben haben. Nur wenn die Philosophie die ihr überlegene Wahrheit der Verkündigung anerkennt, vermag sie mit ihr zusammenzuwirken, wodurch auch die Philosophie selbst gefördert wird.

L'Athéisme, Problème majeur de l'Evangélisation dans le monde d'Aujourd'hui

J. DE FINANCE, S. J.

I

La diffusion massive de l'athéisme complique singulièrement aujourd'hui le travail de l'évangélisation. Il ne s'agit plus simplement de redresser, de purifier, d'amener à sa pleine expression le sens du divin connaturel à l'homme, d'annoncer à la conscience religieuse ce qu'elle cherchait obscurément, ce dont elle n'osait même pas rêver. Dans le monde de plus en plus sécularisé qui est le nôtre, c'est cette religiosité élémentaire qui semble en voie de disparition. Le terrain sur lequel opéraient, parfois à leur insu, apologistes et missionnaires, s'effondre sous nos pieds; une certains structure spirituelle qui permettait la communication de la Parole, est aujourd'hui, chez beaucoup, inexistante. Ce qui ne va pas sans graves conséquences pour les croyants eux-mêmes, dont la foi ne trouve plus son substrat psychologique normal, sans que celui-ci ait encore été remplacé.

Précisons bien le caractère de cette *forma mentis*, qui tend à prédominer dans de larges secteurs du monde occidental (pour ne parler que de celui-ci). Ce n'est pas seulement le *doute*, parfaitement compatible avec un réel sens de Dieu (chez le douteur qui souffre de son état et voudrait pouvoir croire). Ce n'est pas non plus simplement la négation formelle de Dieu, qui supposerait du moins que le problème a été jugé sensé et intéressant. Cette négation se rencontre certes, comme elle se rencontrait déjà chez les « insensés » dont parle l'Ecriture; mais l'athéisme contemporain tend à aller au-delà, en vidant la question sur Dieu de tout sens, existentiel ou même logique. De tout sens existentiel. Bien sûr, il y a eu de tout temps des hommes qui ont vécu sans tenir compte de Dieu, mais cette indifférence

était le plus souvent assez superficielle, la foi ou du moins la religiosité profonde réapparaissaient à l'occasion (dans l'épreuve ou le danger, par exemple). Les « esprits forts », les hommes véritablement « sans Dieu » étaient l'exception. Ce n'est plus vrai aujourd'hui. Pour beaucoup de nos contemporains semble déjà réalisé ce que Marx annonçait de l'*homme socialiste* dans un passage célèbre des *Manuscrits économico-philosophiques*: que la question sur Dieu pour lui ne se poserait plus [1]. De fait, cette question ne tient pratiquement aucune place dans le cercle de leurs préoccupations et de leurs intérêts; elle est ou paraît sans incidence sur leur vie. D'un point de vue pragmatique, la notion de Dieu est vide si rien n'est changé dans mon existence, que Dieu existe ou non. Or, à considérer — superficiellement, je veux bien — le comportement moyen des croyants et des non croyants, on pourrait être tenté de souscrire à cette conclusion. Une enquête de niveau purement sociologique, limitée aux phénomènes observables et plus ou moins mesurables, tend à réduire au minimum l'influence de facteurs que leur intériorité et leur profondeur défendent contre l'observation et la mesure. Il faut tenir compte de ces limitations et ne pas conclure trop vite à l'inexistence de ce qu'on n'a pas pu nettement repérer. Il reste que, pour une large fraction de l'humanité contemporaine, tout semble se passer comme si l'existence de Dieu ne la concernait pas.

Mais, plus radicalement, c'est le sens logique, lui-même, et toute espèce de sens, qui, selon le néopositivisme d'un Ayer, par exemple, ou d'un Carnap, semble faire défaut à la notion de Dieu. Aux yeux de A. J. Ayer, qui représente une forme extrême de cette tendance, les propositions métaphysiques (comme du reste les propositions éthiques ou esthétiques), ne sont par elles-mêmes ni vraies ni fausses: simplement *elles n'ont pas de sens*. Elles ne *signifient rien*, pas même nos « états d'âme », nos émotions, qu'elles *expriment* cependant, mais comme le ferait une interjection ou un cri [2]. C'est qu'une proposition n'est signifiante que si sa vérité et sa fausseté, la réalité ou l'irréalité de son objet, se réfèrent à des critères vérifiables empiriquement. Nous ne pouvons évidemment ici exposer et encore moins discuter les diverses formes de cet empirisme néopositiviste (en particulier dans son recours, chez Ayer, à l'analyse linguistique). Disons seulement qu'à notre avis cette sorte d'athéisme nous paraît beaucoup plus radicale que, par exemple, la forme marxiste. Pour le marxiste, si la proposition « Dieu existe » est fausse, du moins garde-t-elle un sens logique: on cherchera à la réfuter. Ici au contraire toute possibilité de dialogue semble d'avance abolie. Il faut d'abord prouver que l'on dit quelque chose ...

[1] K. MARX, *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844*, in *Karl Marx — Friedrich Engels, Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Erste Abteilung, Band 3, Berlin 1932, p. 125.

[2] A. J. AYER, *Language, Truth and Logic*, London, 1951, pp. 35-45. — Cf. R. CARNAP, *La science et la métaphysique devant l'analyse logique du langage*, (trad. par E. Vouillemin d'un article paru en 1931 dans la revue *Erkenntnis*). « *Les métaphysiciens sont des musiciens sans don musical* », ib., p. 44 (souligné dans le texte).

II

La diffusion de cet état d'esprit est favorisée par celle de la civilisation scientifique et technique. Non que la science (au sens moderne du mot) ou la technique soient par elles-mêmes contraires à une affirmation dont l'objet est hors de leur champ. Ce n'est pas à elles de décider si leur domaine est coextensif ou non au réel, s'il est possible ou non d'atteindre une vérité autrement que par les méthodes de vérification qui leur sont propres. Si elles le font, elles sortent de leurs limites et s'engagent sur le terrain de la philosophie, voire de la métaphysique; car, comme le disait déjà à peu près le vieil Aristote, ne pas vouloir philosopher, c'est encore philosopher. Non ce n'est pas la science, l'esprit scientifique comme tels, qui rendent sans intérêt la question sur Dieu: c'est l'impérialisme d'une « science » sortie de ses frontières et prétendant à une monarchie universelle et exclusive dans l'ordre du savoir.

Mais il faut reconnaître que cet impérialisme trouve de puissants alliés dans la conscience humaine en général et dans celle de l'homme moderne en particulier. Il y a chez l'homme, avec le sentiment de son indigence et de sa dépendance, un désir profond de se suffire, de trouver en soi et dans son domaine connaturel — l'univers exploré et dominé — son achèvement et

son repos. L'immanence, pour la pensée, semble plus essentielle que l'intentionnalité. Or, par la possibilité d'une vérification empirique, la science reste tout entière dans l'immanence: le cercle se boucle. Il y a homogénéité entre le processus scientifique et le mode sensitivo-spirituel de la connaissance et de la vie humaines. Et l'esprit humain s'y sent d'autant mieux chez lui qu'il a posé lui-même les conditions de la vérification. Mais il y a plus. A la différence de la connaissance vulgaire, de l'expérience quotidienne, la pensée scientifique retrouve le contact du réel après un long circuit de calculs et d'hypothèses auxquelles l'expérience, méthodiquement conduite, apportera éventuellement sa sanction. Ainsi la pensée goûte la joie de prendre son essor au-delà des apparences et le plus souvent au-delà du représentable (quoi de plus irreprésentable que les entités de la physique contemporaine?), mais toujours en continuité avec le représentable et l'observable, puisque ses constructions les plus abstraites sont toujours définissables en termes d'opérations parfaitement déterminées et que c'est un événement constatable qui atteste à la fin la validité — toujours provisoire d'ailleurs — de la construction. Joie de voler sans jamais perdre le lien avec la terre, où l'on reviendra se poser, comme pour se prouver, en la foulant, qu'on n'a pas été le jouet d'un rêve! — Or il est évident que ce genre de satisfaction intellectuelle ne se retrouve pas dans la connaissance de Dieu, qu'elle soit de nature proprement religieuse ou simplement métaphysique. Sans doute, cette connaissance part, elle aussi de l'expérience: expérience du monde mouvant, multiple, précaire et téléologiquement ordonné, comme dans les « preuves » classiques, expérience de l'activité spirituelle, comme dans la lignée augustinienne, expérience des mystiques, comme dans *Les deux sources ...*, de Bergson. Même la preuve cartésienne par l'idée de parfait entend bien s'appuer sur une constatation: la présence, dans l'esprit, d'une idée qui ne ressemble à aucune autre et qui ne peut être notre oeuvre. Et la preuve anselmienne n'est qu'un paralogisme si elle ne se ramène à l'expérience radicale du pouvoir infini de ma pensée finie. — Cette radicalité est d'ailleurs commune à toute expérience qui doit servir de point de départ à la montée vers Dieu: il faut, dans la réalité, repérer un caractère dont on ne puisse rendre compte par quelque cause particulière, un caractère foncier et universel. Mais un tel caractère ne peut plus être représenté par un concept de même type que les autres. Les opérations qui permettent d'en former la notion ne peuvent avoir l'allure simple, univoque, définissable sans résidu des opérations mathématiques ou logiques. La pensée y sera toujours au-dela de son expression. D'où, pour le « scientifique », la tentation de n'y voir que des mots vagues, sans signification précise. Tout au plus les classera-t-il dans l'inexprimable (« das Mystische » de Wittgenstein)[3], quand ce ne sera pas dans l'irrationnel. La vérité est que ces notions nous renvoient à l'activité profonde et en quelque sorte « divinatrice » de l'esprit, qui est au coeur de la découverte scientifique, mais n'entre pas elle-même dans les calculs de la science. La métaphysique est un effort pour exprimer ce qui reste inexprimable en termes de « science ». Elle implique une prise de conscience (pas toujours nettement formulée) de ce qui conditionne toute pensée, de ce qui est au principe de son « excès » sur tout le domaine des « choses » et sur le sujet lui-même. « Science rigoureuse », elle ne l'est que par la rigueur avec laquelle elle s'attache, sans jamais y réussir parfaitement, à libérer les pures exigences de la pensée au point où elles expriment les pures exigences de l'être. Mais cette ambition lui coûte cher. Si la monde de la « science » — au sens courant du mot — est celui de l'univoque, le monde dont parle la métaphysique n'est atteint que par le biais de l'analogie. C'est dire que l'esprit humain ne s'y sent jamais pleinement chez lui. Et surtout la vérification décisive est impossible, du moins telle que l'entend aujourd'hui la pensée scientifique. Dieu n'est pas un objet d'expérience, pas, en tout cas, d'expérience communicable et répétable en des conditions données[4]. L'expérience religieuse n'est pas directement une expérience de Dieu, mais l'expérience d'états produits par la pensée de Dieu, l'amour de Dieu, etc., effets dont on pourra peut-être, dans certains cas, induire la réalité de leur objet, mais qui ne sont pas homogènes à celui-ci. De toute manière, le passage à l'affirmation du Transcendant demande un « saut », une « sortie » de la pensée hors de la sphère où elle habite naturellement et se trouve à l'aise.

[3] L. WITTGENSTEIN, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, 6.42, in *Schriften ...*, Frankf. a. M., 1960, p. 80.

[4] Il y a, bien sûr, des vérifications scientifiques non répétables, comme les observations faites lors de phénomènes astronomiques exceptionnels, mais elles sont de droit entièrement exprimables et communicables sans résidu pertinent pour la pensée scientifique.

Pourtant ce caractère si particulier de la connaissance de Dieu ne suffit pas à expliquer la diffusion actuelle de l'athéisme. Dès que la pensée religieuse a atteint une certaine finesse, elle a su distinguer la connaissance de Dieu de celle d'un objet empirique: il n'y a là rien de nouveau. Quant à l'opposition de la démarche qui mène à Dieu à celle de la pensée « scientifique », elle n'est perceptible qu'aux esprits formés aux disciplines rigoureuses de la « science » et ceux-ci, jusqu'à une époque récente, ne constituaient qu'un groupe restreint. De toute manière, la mentalité athée déborde largement cette couche sociale. Il doit y avoir un autre facteur.

Peut-être n'est-il pas bien difficile de le repérer.

La « science » se présente aujourd'hui à l'humanité à travers la technique, comme l'âme à travers le visage. Elle manifeste sa vérité et sa valeur par les succès dont elle couronne l'effort humain. Succès spectaculaires, comme les explorations spatiales, ou réussites qui, plus modestes d'apparence, transforment peut-être plus profondément notre vie quotidienne. La science parle aux hommes par les machines.

Ce serait, je crois, une grosse erreur d'expliquer uniquement ou principalement le prestige de la science technicienne par les améliorations qu'elle apporte à la condition humaine. Les raisons de ce prestige sont bien plus profondes. Dans les triomphes de la technique, l'homme prend conscience de sa victoire sur les choses, de sa dignité seigneuriale par rapport à l'univers. Et c'est là certes un résultat positif. L'homme de l'âge technique se dépouille peu à peu de sa crainte superstitieuse devant la nature, ses mystères, ses énergies menaçantes, ses caprices. (Vice versa, la technique n'a été possible que pour une humanité déjà libérée des croyances erronées: un peuple adorateur des astres n'aurait jamais songé à y envoyer des fusées!). Certes, la science contemporaine voit surgir à chaque pas de nouveaux problèmes, se heurte à des énigmes, des paradoxes, d'apparentes antinomies. Mais rien de tout cela n'inspire l'effroi, la crainte révérentielle: il s'agit de secteurs non encore dominés du réel, mais que rien n'interdit à l'homme de conquérir. Pour lui désormais, la voie est libre, indéfiniment.

Le danger est que cet homme, dans l'ivresse de sa victoire, en vienne à perdre *tout* sens du respect et à se regarder comme maître *absolu,* maître sans maître. L'humanité de l'âge technique fait parfois penser à ces adolescents qui, découvrant tout à coup leur personnalité, affirment, de la façon la plus provocante, leur fraîche indépendance.

Mais surtout il faut remarquer — et en cela, l'analyse marxiste n'a pas tout à fait tort — que, dans la conscience commune, le besoin de Dieu a bien souvent été rattaché à certaines déficiences dues à la situation historique de l'homme (non seulement à son aliénation économique et sociale, mais, plus simplement et plus inévitablement, à son faible développement culturel). Dieu semblait alors être là pour remédier à des insuffisances qu'une science et une technique plus évoluées devaient être en mesure de corriger un jour — comme c'est, en grande partie, le cas aujourd'hui. La Bible paraît blâmer le roi Asa d'avoir eu recours aux médecins [5]: aujourd'hui nous jugeons sévèrement, du point de vue moral, les sectes que interdisent ce recours. Dieu semble perdre ainsi, aux yeux de beaucoup, sa raison d'être. (« Dieu, pour quoi faire? », demandait, il y a quelques années, un article qui fit du bruit).

Ne jugeons pas à la légère les formes naïves du sentiment religieux. Il est bien naturel que l'indigence métaphysique — vrai point d'attache de toute « démonstration » de l'existence de Dieu — se fasse d'abord sentir et trouve sa première expression dans les besoins élémentaires qu'elle seule rend possibles mais qui ne l'expriment pas tout entière. Prendre conscience de notre dépendance radicale suppose un effort de réflexion, une plongée au-dessous des apparences, au dessous de la zone superficielle où notre existence quotidienne se déroule, et cela n'est possible — comme la pensée métaphysique en général — qu'à un stade relativement avancé de la culture. Mais enfin, il reste que, faute d'avoir atteint ce stade — et l'humanité, dans son ensemble, en est encore bien éloignée —, la prise en mains par l'homme des nécessités dont il était autrefois l'esclave et le jouet, semble désormais et progressivement reléguer Dieu au magasin des vieilleries sans emploi. D'autant plus que les succès déjà remportés par la technique — ils sont d'une évidence aveuglante — tendent naturellement à s'extrapoler. La régulation, par exemple, des phénomènes météorologiques, n'apparaît plus du tout comme impossible [6]. Et qui sait, se demandent certains, si l'on n'arri-

[5] *II Chron.,* 16, 12.

[6] Voir, par exemple, ces déclarations du savant soviétique Obroutchev:

vera pas un jour à vaincre la vieillesse et la mort (comme Bergson, semble-t-il, le laissait entrevoir à la fin d'un chapitre de l'*Evolution créatrice*)? — Quel sens dès lors peuvent avoir pour cet être si sûr de soi les gestes de soumission, d'adoration et de prière? Il y verra bien plutôt une dégradation, un outrage à sa dignité — valeur qui, dans le champ axiologique, semble occuper la place laissée vide par le dieu mort.

Ajoutons une considération moins profonde mais non négligeable. Le monde créé par la technique est par excellence le monde du *divertissement*, au sens pascalien. Un monde qui tire l'homme hors de lui, draînant vers soi toute son attention et tout son intérêt. Monde coloré, bruyant, violent, où le système nerveux survolté ne permet plus à l'homme le repos méditatif, le retour aux profondeurs. L'esprit encombré, écrasé par la masse prodigieuse d'informations qu'il reçoit s'épuise à les parcourir, à les classer, à les organiser et n'est plus disponible pour se poser à leur sujet les dernières questions. Celles-ci restent hors de l'horizon ... Rien d'étonnant que certains cherchent un substitut de cette dimension perdue dans les « voyages » psychédéliques. Mais ces produits fabriqués par la technique pour remédier au vide intérieur causé par la technique, portent le mal à son comble en creusant une profondeur factice où l'esprit s'engloutit.

III

On ne s'étonnera pas, dès lors, que l'athéisme moderne se soucie peu en général de « démontrer » l'inexistence de Dieu ou même de critiquer sérieusement les arguments en faveur de son existence [7]. S'il prend quelquefois la peine de le faire, ce sera

« Il faut ... apprendre à gouverner le temps, à régler les vents et la température comme on fait aujourd'hui pour les fleuves; déplacer les nuages, mettre à notre disposition la pluie, le beau temps, la neige et la chaleur » (cité dans *Grundlagen des Marxismus-Leninismus*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1960, pp. 825-826).

[7] Significative, à ce propos, est l'enquête de CHR. CHABANIS, auprès d'une vingtaine d'athées de divers milieux, cultures et professions: *Dieu existe-t-il? Non répondent* ... (suivent les noms des personnes interrogées), Paris, 1973. Les motivations proprement intellectuelles ne cherchent guère à justifier que l'agnosticisme. Ce qui domine est surtout le manque d'intérêt pour la question de Dieu.

plutôt pour donner une apparence de justification à une position prise d'avance. Claude Tresmontant a bien dénoncé cette attitude dans son livre: *Les problèmes de l'athéisme* [8]. Elle est manifeste, notamment, dans l'ouvrage célèbre de Jacques Monod: *Le hasard et la nécessité* [9]. Une hypothèse de travail, une règle méthodologique: l'exclusion de toute finalité intentionnelle, devient subrepticement une affirmation qu'il faut bien qualifier de « métaphysique »: « une telle finalité n'existe pas ». Par un glissement tout semblable beaucoup passent, sans s'en douter, de cette constatation évidente, qui est presque une tautologie: la « science », au sens moderne du mot, ne connaît rien (et ne peut rien connaître) hors du monde physique, de l'univers, à cette affirmation toute différente: il n'y a pas d'autre réalité que l'univers, ou: le domaine de la « science » est coextensif à l'être. Ceci posé, il est bien clair que le « problème de Dieu » est résolu d'avance — négativement. Mais la question est justement de savoir si le glissement dont nous parlons est légitime.

Nous ne prétendons nullement que ces prises préalables de positions soient nécessairement un indice de mauvaise foi. L'extrapolation de la règle méthodologique en affirmation métaphysique est une tentation trop naturelle chez le chercheur à ce point absorbé par l'objet et les lois de sa recherche que plus rien en dehors de là ne semble pour lui exister ou valoir. Ne sommes-nous pas tous portés à juger inintéressant et pratiquement inexistant ce qui ne *nous* intéresse pas? — Et le monde que la science explore, que la technique conquiert et met à notre usage, apparaît tellement riche, tellement multiforme, tellement creusé d'abîmes fascinants, mystérieux mais non interdits, qu'il peut, au premier abord, donner l'impression de satisfaire ces aspirations qui font la noblesse de l'homme: le désir de connaître et le besoin de ce qui nous dépasse. Besoin à la fois de dominer et d'être dominé. Car l'homme désire trouver, autour de soi, au-dessus de soi, un domaine qui provisoirement lui échappe mais lui offre la possibilité d'une recherche et d'un progrès indéfinis. La domination qui le blesse — et la conscience moderne est particulièrement sensible sur ce point — est celle d'une autre liberté. Il se pliera plus facilement à une nécessité impersonnelle

[8] Paris, 1972.
[9] Paris, 1970.

devant qui toutes les libertés sont égales. D'où la répugnance de tant d'esprits, peu satisfaits d'ailleurs du pur matérialisme, à accepter un Dieu personnel.

On peut dire que pour l'homme contemporain la transcendance « verticale », propre au divin, tend à être remplacée par une transcendance « horizontale », soit en « longueur », selon la ligne du temps (vers des « lendemains qui chantent », comme dans le marxisme), soit en « largeur », vers des domaines nouveaux, déconcertants, bouleversants, de l'univers, qui « élargissent » en effet immensément notre vision des choses mais — pour le pensée métaphysique et religieuse — restent sur le plan de la facticité, de la contingence — sur le plan « créaturel ».

IV

On dit souvent que l'athéisme est une purification de la foi et correspond, en quelque sorte, au moment négatif de la connaissance de Dieu. Qu'il puisse être pour le croyant l'occasion d'épurer sa notion de Dieu et de la débarrasser de maints étais illusoires, c'est incontestable. Mais il serait naïf de penser que sa vraie cause est toujours un fausse idée, une idée trop « naïve » de Dieu. Certes notre idée de Dieu est et sera toujours imparfaite et ses expressions appellent sans cesse des précisions nouvelles qui sont essentiellement des négations. « Toutes les perfections qu'on nomme, ce n'est pas cela », écrivait Marie de l'Incarnation, en rapportant une de ses extases [10]. Il peut ainsi arriver, il arrive souvent que l'idée de Dieu se présente à l'esprit tellement misérable et déformée qu'elle suscite une invincible répulsion. Seulement cette déformation peut avoir deux causes. L'une — à laquelle on s'arrête d'ordinaire — tient à celui qui présente cette idée, à la manière dont il la présente et, plus immédiatement, à la difficulté pour le lecteur ou l'auditeur d'interpréter correctement les informations ainsi reçues. Qui de nous n'a été, une fois ou l'autre, désagréablement impressionné par quelque prédicateur ou quelque apologète maladroits? Pensons aussi à certaines expressions de la piété populaire (ou même de la littérature religieuse de niveau élevé), quand elles sont détachées de leur contexte, interprétées naïvement, sans préparation suffisante etc. Il est clair qu'un esprit formé à une pensée rigoureuse et raffinée qui aborderait la Bible comme un texte à prendre dans son sens immédiat, sans aucune idée de l'exégèse et de l'herméneutique, ne manquerait pas d'être profondément choqué par les anthropomorphismes à travers lesquels s'exprime l'idée de Dieu. Et plus encore peut-être par tout ce dont le Livre semble faire remonter la responsabilité à Yavé. (« L'Ancien Testament, quel scandale pour les bouddhistes! », me confiait un missionnaire). Mais, dans ce cas, une étude sérieuse, un effort loyal d'information et, de l'autre côté, un enseignement adapté devraient, en principe, suffire à dissiper les équivoques. Ce que l'on prenait pour une affirmation catégorique du Livre saint n'en était pas une ou devait être comprise autrement; le Dieu biblique n'avait donc pas la figure qu'on avait cru lui voir. — Mais cette figure peut être due, non plus à une simple erreur de perception, mais à une fausse attitude spirituelle — et c'est l'autre cause que nous annoncions. J'ai beau avoir la vue bonne, si je regarde du mauvais côté ou la tête en bas, je verrai tout de travers ou même à l'envers. A celui qui fait de soi-même l'Absolu ou qui met son Absolu dans le monde, tout ce qui conteste cette prétention apparaîtra inévitablement comme absurde et mauvais.

Nous sommes ici en présence d'une détermination radicale qui se situe bien au-dessous du niveau des options concrètes, domaine de ce qu'on appelle couramment la « vie morale ». Il ne s'agit donc nullement, comme on l'a fait trop souvent jadis, de voir la cause de l'athéisme dans la dépravation du coeur, dans les « passions » ou dans l'orgueil. Nous ne voudrions même pas dire que ladite détermination radicale soit la cause la plus fréquente et la plus décisive de l'athéisme. Tout simplement parce que nous n'en savons rien. C'est là un domaine qui échappe à l'observation et aux statistiques. On peut penser que dans la plupart des cas les deux facteurs que nous avons distingués interviennent à doses inégales.

Quoi qu'il en soit de ce point, il y a une tentation contre laquelle il convient aujourd'hui de nous tenir en garde: celle de voir trop facilement dans les athées des croyants qui s'ignorent. Cette façon d'annexer à la foi ceux qui la rejettent expressément est, au surplus, fort maladroite: elle vexe et irrite ceux

[10] MARIE DE L'INCARNATION, Relation de 1633, dans *Ecrits ...*, éd. D. Jamet, Paris, 1929, I, p. 201.

à qui elle voudrait tendre la main. Et c'est même, paradoxalement, là où cette interprétation serait le plus justifiée qu'elle s'avère, à bon droit, comme plus offensante. Celui, en effet, qui repousse Dieu parce qu'il se fait de lui une image déformée — l'image d'un dieu cruel, despotique, arbitraire, insatiable de louanges, et pour qui la simple existence des autres apparaît comme une offense; ou encore celle d'un « étant » dilaté sans mesure et ne laissant, par suite, dans l'espace métaphysique nulle place pour les autres étants —, celui-là est fondé à le rejeter: un tel dieu n'est qu'une caricature; l'athée le rejette en fait au nom d'une valeur dont l'affirmation et le culte sont, en quelque manière, une affirmation et une culte implicites du vrai Dieu. Mais tant que le mot « dieu » ne signifie pas pour lui autre chose que ce qu'il croit entendre, il n'y a pas pour lui d'offense plus sensible que de vouloir l'enrôler parmi les adorateurs de ce fantôme. Cas extrême sans doute: le refus de Dieu est loin d'avoir toujours cette pureté de motivation; mais cas nullement chimérique. — Là au contraire où le refus vient d'une fermeture préalable, il ne faut plus parler, en aucun sens, de « croyant anonyme ». A le faire, on risquerait de voir l'athée se clore et se durcir encore davantage dans son refus, pour se défendre contre une invasion et une annexion de sa liberté — qui est pour lui son tout, justement parce qu'elle est *sa* liberté.

V

On ne tentera pas ici même simplement d'esquisser une « pastorale des athées », genre de question pour lequel nous ne nous sentons ni compétence ni inclination particulières et qui demanderait, du reste, d'interminables précisions et distinctions. Pas davantage, ou encore moins, d'amorcer une « démonstration » de l'existence de Dieu. Il nous semble pourtant, de ce qui a été dit, pouvoir tirer quelques indications d'ordre très général.

Ce qui s'impose en premier lieu en face de l'athéisme contemporain, c'est — après, bien sûr, l'effort de compréhension sympathique — de redonner à l'homme, sinon le sens de Dieu (car c'est tout le problème), du moins la conscience qu'il y a une question sur Dieu et qu'elle l'intéresse vitalement. « Je trouve bon qu'on n'approfondisse pas Copernic, mais ceci! » [11]. Pascal avait surtout en vue l'immortalité de l'âme, mais ce qu'il dit vaut aussi et plus encore quand il s'agit de Dieu. Sans doute contestera-t-on que « toutes nos actions doivent prendre une route différente » selon la réponse donnée à ces deux questions et Pascal, à mon avis, est allé un peu trop loin. L'impératif moral ne se fonde pas directement et immédiatement sur un « commandement de Dieu », mais sur un jugement de la raison droite et il ne trouve pas sa vraie justification dans l'attente des sanctions de l'au-delà. Je ne dirais certes pas avec Grotius que l'ordre moral subsisterait « même si Dieu n'existait pas », car si j'admets l'existence de Dieu et pour autant que je l'admets, l'hypothèse de sa non-existence ne peut avoir pour moi aucun sens. Mais je crois possible à celui qui ne l'admet pas d'entendre l'appel de la valeur et de ressentir l'exigence du devoir. Qu'il y ait, dans cette reconnaissance d'un absolu de valeur, une certaine « connaissance implicite » de Dieu, d'un niveau supérieur à celle que l'on peut découvrir en toute affirmation d'être, soit, et nous y reviendrons; mais nous avons dit avec quelle prudence il faut traiter ce thème. — Il reste que, si l'homme ne réussit pas à voir comment cette valeur qui s'impose à lui se fonde dans l'être, hors duquel rien n'est et rien ne vaut, si l'Idéal de la raison n'est pas reconnu comme l'index du Transcendant, la négation ou la méconnaissance de celui-ci tendra presqu'inévitablement à refluer sur celui-là, entraînant dans son éclipse l'ordre moral tout entier, malgré les protestations d'une conscience trop facilement convaincue d'illusion. Et c'est en fait, comme Sartre l'a fort bien noté [12], ce que montre l'histoire de la morale contemporaine et de sa progressive dégradation. Autre chose est de pouvoir construire une morale valide sans poser la question de son fondement ultime dans l'être — question qui relève, domme telle, de la métaphysique plutôt que de l'éthique et laisse entre temps celle-ci compétente dans sa sphère propre —, autre chose, la question une fois posée, d'y répondre par la négative ou même de lui refuser un sens. En niant explicitement l'implicite de l'affirmation morale, on brise le mouve-

[11] PASCAL, *Pensées*, éd. Brunschvicg, n. 218.

[12] J.-P. SARTRE, *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, Paris, 1946, pp. 34-38.

ment de celle-ci et on finit par lui enlever sa force. Là gît l'ambiguïté de la morale « laïque », de la morale « sans Dieu ».

Concédons pourtant que s'il s'agit du dieu des déistes, la question de son existence n'a qu'un intérêt spéculatif, d'ailleurs assez mince, et ne saurait en tout cas intervenir dans nos décisions pratiques. Il en va tout autrement quand il s'agit du Dieu chrétien, du Dieu que la Bible représente comme haïssant l'injustice et le mensonge, comme l'ami des coeurs droits ... Du Dieu, qui, s'il n'est pas simplement le gardien de l'ordre moral (surtout pas de l'« ordre établi »!), est pourtant celui qui rend à chacun selon ses oeuvres. Et certes le bien est à faire immédiatement parce qu'il est le bien, le mal est à fuir parce qu'il est le mal. Mais l'homme étant ce qu'il est, et le désir du bonheur constituant le « ressort » naturel de notre agir libre — bien qu'il dépende de la liberté de situer le bonheur où il se doit —, l'action droite trouve dans la pensée du « juste juge » un encouragement efficace, un stimulant ou un frein à certains moments presque indispensables.

Il faut être toutefois bien prudent quand on présenté les choses de ce biais. Vouloir susciter l'intérêt pour la question sur Dieu en évoquant les périls auxquels on s'expose en la négligeant, risque de provoquer une réaction exactement contraire à celle qu'on attendait. L'homme contemporain n'entend pas qu'on essaie de le prendre par la crainte et il croirait déroger à sa dignité s'il tenait compte de dangers qu'il se représente — ou qu'on lui présente — trop souvent sous une forme incroyable et impensable. Ce serait, à ses yeux, signe de lâcheté ou de crédulité infantile.

Mais c'est ici qu'il faut dénoncer une confusion. « Athéisme, marque de force d'esprit, mais jusqu'à un certain degré seulement » [13]. Il y a un vrai courage, une vraie « force de l'esprit », à braver des dangers déterminés, à affronter les obstacles qui s'opposent à la réalisation de notre idéal, à risquer notre vie même pour une valeur qui lui donne son plein sens. Notre centre le plus personnel est suspendu à cette valeur qui transcende notre existence temporelle. S'exposer à la perdre, c'est s'exposer à perdre ce qu'il y a en nous de plus « nous-mêmes », c'est accepter le non-sens de l'existence. Il n'y a en cela aucune « force

[13] PASCAL, *Pensées*, éd. Brunschvicg, n. 225.

de l'esprit », mais aveuglement et folie. Encore la folie reste-t-elle extérieure au centre intime du « je »: on plaint le fou, qui songe à le blâmer? Ici au contraire c'est le centre lui-même qui est atteint.

Il n'y a aucune commune mesure entre les dangers homogènes à notre expérience — même ceux de l'enfer dantesque — et le risque de perdre sa raison d'être. C'est à ce titre que la question sur Dieu peut et doit faire sentir son urgence à ceux qui l'ajournent ou qui l'écartent. Ce n'est pas un jeu de l'intelligence. Elle nous concerne dans notre existence et ce sens existentiel commande, malgré les apparences, le sens logique, car il ramène l'homme à une profondeur qui échappe aux subtilités d'une analyse de surface. A la question par laquelle Blondel ouvre son enquête: « Oui ou non la vie humaine a-t-elle un sens? » [14]

Tout cela suppose évidemment que l'homme prenne son existence au sérieux. Le sens de Dieu est inséparable d'un sens authentique de l'homme. Quand l'Absolu Transcendant disparaît de l'horizon, la transcendance de l'homme sur les choses périclite. C'est de fait ce que nous voyons aujourd'hui où le sujet, hier encore si fier de son intériorité, de son autonomie et de son ouverture, semble s'évanouir dans un jeu de structures objectives et impersonnelles. C'est pourquoi une tâche essentielle pour qui veut restaurer dans l'homme la dimension religieuse, c'est d'abord de rendre à l'homme le sentiment de sa dignité, la conscience de sa supériorité sur tout le domaine des objets, le respect devant son propre mystère, mais aussi la confiance dans la raison. Comment parler de Dieu à celui qui ne voit dans l'homme qu'un animal plus perfectionné, qu'un stade évolutif de la matière, à celui qui a pris son parti, définitivement, de sa finitude et de sa relativité et répond à tout propos sur l'Absolu par une rire silencieux? — Mais, réciproquement, la réflexion sur la dignité de l'homme, sur le contraste entre sa finitude et sa précarité ontiques d'une part et d'autre part son ouverture sans limites assignables en tant que sujet spirituel, pose à la pensée une question dont la réponse ne peut être donnée à l'intérieur du monde des étants. Si l'Absolu n'est pas « en soi », s'il n'a que le statut d'un « être de raison », s'il ap-

[14] M. BLONDEL, *L'action* (1893), Paris, 1950, p. VII.

paraît simplement au terme d'une activité spirituelle dont il est pourtant la condition et le sens, alors l'ouverture ne s'ouvre sur rien et n'est qu'une illusion d'ouverture et toute la grandeur de l'homme retombe elle aussi dans l'illusion. Sa dignité, sa primauté ne sont, tout au plus, qu'une dignité et une primauté à ses propres yeux. Or ce n'est certes pas là ce que, spontanément et invinciblement, nous affirmons. Si l'homme se juge, en définitive, supérieur à la bête ou aux arbres, il entend bien que cette supériorité ne se rapporte pas simplement à son point de vue particulier, qu'elle vaut « en soi », selon un ordre qui ne connaît pas d'instance supérieure — un ordre donc *absolu*.

La chose est peut-être encore plus sensible quand il s'agit des réalités morales. Soit, par exemple, la valeur de la justice, si fortement ressentie aujourd'hui par les masses et qui semble être pour certains la valeur suprême, voire, comme déjà chez Proudhon, le substitut de Dieu. Qu'est-ce qui en fait le prix? Dira-t-on qu'une juste distribution des biens est désirable parce qu'elle permet à un plus grand nombre d'en jouir et supprime la frustration des moins favorisés? Si l'on s'en tient là, on rabaisse cette valeur éminente à une plate valeur eudémonique ou hédonique, et l'aspiration à la justice laisse transparaître un fond mesquin de ressentiment et de jalousie. Nietzsche aurait alors raison! Mais, en réalité, c'est bien plutôt la jalousie qui cherche parfois à capter pour ses fins la valeur de la justice. Celle-ci n'en dépend pas; elle a une tout autre racine. Elle se fonde à la fois sur la dignité de l'homme et sur l'exigence de la raison, que heurte l'inégalité non justifiée et par conséquent injuste. Et ce n'est pas parce que cette inégalité nous choque que nous la déclarons injuste: c'est parce qu'elle nous apparaît injuste qu'elle nous choque. Il y a une valeur qui nous domine, qui ne dépend pas de nos goûts et de nos choix, et de qui notre propre valeur dépend.

Si l'on admet cela, on n'a pas encore expressément reconnu l'existence de Dieu et il n'est pas du tout sûr qu'on y arrive en fait, car il reste à déterminer le statut de cette valeur, à passer de son affirmation à celle de l'Être Absolu qui la fonde; et c'est là une toute autre démarche qu'il n'est pas dans notre dessein d'exposer ici. Mais, du moins, on aura dépassé l'empirisme terre à terre, on sera sorti de la geôle positiviste, la dimension métaphysique sera retrouvée. Du point de vue épistémologique et psychologique, le gain est sérieux.

Mais il y a plus. Reconnaître un Idéal, une Valeur absolue et exigeante, qui donne sens et valeur à notre vie, n'est-ce pas, comme nous l'avons laissé entrevoir plus haut, reconnaître, sous une forme anonyme, le Bien subsistant et personnel? C'est, en tout cas, être beaucoup plus loin de l'athéisme que là où cette Valeur est méconnue et refusée. Et l'affirmation « implicite » de Dieu contenue dans cette reconnaissance est incomparablement plus proche de l'explicite que l'affirmation impliquée en toute position absolue d'être et de vérité. Car cette reconnaissance engage une démarche de la personne et l'Absolu affirmé dans l'ordre de la valeur laisse déjà pressentir son caractère existentiel et personnel.

VI

Les considérations précédentes se sont déroulées sur le plan de la connaissance « naturelle » de Dieu, utilisant les structures communes au croyant et à l'incroyant, en dehors de tout appel explicite à la Révélation judéo-chrétienne. Mais cette démarche n'est pas exempte de quelque artifice. Non que — même dans les pays où le christianisme a, pendant de longs siècles, imbibé le fond culturel —, l'affirmation de Dieu soit toujours solidaire de l'affirmation chrétienne. Certains admettront, au moins comme hypothèse plausible, un Être suprême, une Intelligence ordonnatrice du Cosmos, qui excluront *a priori* toute intervention de Dieu dans l'histoire et, à plus forte raison, son Incarnation en Jésus Christ. En fait, cependant, c'est d'ordinaire en référence au Dieu chrétien, au Dieu manifesté dans le Christ et annoncé par l'Eglise, que se pose le problème de l'existence de Dieu, du moins quand ce problème cesse d'être purement spéculatif et prend toute sa dimension humaine. Et le chrétien qui cherche à montrer à ses frères athées une voie vers Dieu peut-il faire abstraction de Celui qui a dit de lui-même: « Je suis la Voie »?

Certes, *logiquement*, la foi au Christ présuppose la croyance en Dieu. Pour une vision du monde athée ou agnostique, le Christ n'est tout au plus qu'un homme exceptionnel, un sage,

un ami des hommes, qui a donné à son idéal le témoignage suprême, mais, en aucune façon, *le Sauveur*. De quel salut, d'ailleurs, s'agirait-il? C'est dire que le discours sur Dieu devrait, semble-t-il, précéder l'évangélisation. — Mais la vivante réalité est loin de se conformer toujours à un programme si raisonnable. Dans bien des cas — et pas seulement dans des cas vraiment exceptionnels comme celui d'André Frossard [15] —, l'annonce du Christ fera crouler d'un coup les murailles qui cachaient Dieu. L'action de la grâce échappe à l'expérimentation et aux formules. Ce qu'on peut dire, c'est que la figure du Christ apparaît alors comme une irruption dans notre monde d'une réalité jusque-là méconnue, insoupçonnée ou noyée dans le doute. Mais cela même suppose chez l'homme, une ouverture, une disponibilité fondamentales, une capacité, fût-ce inconsciente, d'accueil. Beaucoup ont connu le Christ « selon la chair »; bien peu l'ont reconnu, et pourtant ils croyaient déjà en Dieu. Dira-t-on que leur foi n'était pas une vraie foi? qu'ils ne connaissaient pas vraiment Dieu? L'évangile de Jean, complété par sa première Lettre, nous invite à penser que cette foi n'allait pas assez loin: elle s'arrêtait au Dieu créateur et Seigneur: elle ignorait le Dieu Père, le Dieu Amour [16]. Or cette ignorance ne va pas sans une certaine fermeture, dont on n'a pas à chercher ici dans quelle mesure elle est elle-même coupable. Retenons seulement que rien ne remplace, quand il s'agit d'accueillir le message chrétien, la disposition fondamentale d'ouverture.

Qu'elle présuppose ou non la connaissance de Dieu, la connaissance du Christ lui donne en tout cas un contenu plus net et, si l'on peut dire, un contour plus ferme. Dans le Christ, la personnalité de Dieu — connaissable théoriquement — s'affirme d'une manière concrète, existentielle. Dieu devient pour nous « Quelqu'un ». L'Incarnation réalise ainsi cette « objectivation », cette présence sensible de l'Absolu; répond à ce désir d'un Dieu qu'on puisse voir et toucher, désir qui est à la racine de l'idolâtrie [17] et qu'Israël avait bien des fois ressenti, mais qui ne

[15] A. FROSSARD, *Dieu existe: je l'ai rencontré*, Paris, 1969.

[16] Cf. *Jean*, 15, 21; 16, 3; 17, 25 et *I Jean*, 3, 1; 4, 8.

[17] Comparer, par exemple, ce texte d'un auteur de l'école de Ramanuja, traitant de la présence d'Ishvara dans l'idole: « Quoique omniscient, il apparaît comme ignorant, quoique spirituel, comme matériel, quoique maître de lui-même, comme étant au pouvoir des hommes, cuoique tout-puissant, comme impuissant, quoique entièrement libre de besoins, comme éprouvant des besoins, quoique maître, comme serviteur, quoique invisible, comme visible, quoique insaisissable, comme saisissable » (Pillai Lokācārya, *Arthapañcaka*, 2. 5, cité par O. LACOMBE, *L'Absolu selon le Vedânta*, Paris, 1939, p. 328) et cet autre de saint Léon le Grand: « Invisibilis in suis, visibilis factus est in nostris; incomprehensibilis voluit comprehendi; ante tempora manens, esse coepit ex tempore; universitatis Dominus servilem formam, obumbrata majestatis suae dignitate, suscepit; impassibilis Deus non dedignatus est homo esse passibilis, et immortalis mortis legibus subjacere » (*Sermo XXII, in Nativitate Domini* II, n. 2; PL. t. 54, col. 195 A; cf. *ep. XXVIII* ad Flavianum, c. 4, *ib.*, col. 765 C - 767 A).

pouvait trouver dans l'idole qu'une satisfaction illusoire. En Jésus Christ le Signifié est foncièrement identique au Signifiant, comme le sens au mot.

Mais, à travers la personnalité du Christ, la personnalité divine s'entr'ouvre, au regard de la foi, en une Trinité qui ne morcelle pas l'Unité première, mais en fait ressortir au contraire la force et la pureté.

Il suit de tout cela que, dans le rapport du chrétien au Christ, la relation « verticale » à Dieu est immanente à la relation « horizontale » à l'homme Jésus. Mais au moyen et au-delà de cette relation, l'homme est appelé à participer à ce que nous pouvons appeler l'« horizontalité transcendante » des relations intra-divines. Ainsi le problème de Dieu se pose d'une façon toute nouvelle. Le mystère reste ce qu'il est: il est même devenu plus profond, mais il s'est fait proche et l'homme est introduit dans sa profondeur.

Bien souvent cependant, ce qui attirera d'abord le regard de l'incroyant ce sera plutôt le « fait chrétien », ou, comme dit Teilhard, le « phylum chrétien » (mieux encore: le phylum judéo-chrétien). Comment d'ailleurs rencontrer le Christ en dehors de la tradition qui nous transmet son message? Or il y a là, dans ce fait, quelque chose de singulier, quelque chose qui interpelle la pensée quand celle-ci ne s'est pas fermée d'avance au problème essentiel. Ce courant qui traverse les siècles, ouvrant aux hommes des horizons nouveaux, les haussant vers des valeurs insoupçonnées, ne serait-il pas le signe d'une Initiative transcendante, d'une Energie spirituelle supérieure agitant notre lourde masse?

« Si je n'en étais pas déjà convaincu de naissance, je crois que je me le demanderais », écrivait, vers la fin de sa vie, Teil-

hard de Chardin.[18] Bergson, qui n'en était pas « convaincu de naissance », se l'est demandé et l'on sait où ses réflexions l'ont conduit.

Mais cela même comporte une leçon sévère. Car si le « fait chrétien » est un signe, il dépend en partie de chaque chrétien que ce signe soit plus ou moins lisible. L'athéisme contemporain a sans doute bien d'autres causes que l'inertie des croyants, leur sourde résistance à l'esprit de l'Evangile, mais il y trouve certainement un de ses meilleurs atouts.

[18] P. Teilhard de Chardin, *Remarques complémentaires sur la nature du Point Oméga* ou *De la singularité du phénomène chrétien.* Appendice à *La singularité de l'espèce humaine,* dans *L'apparition de l'homme,* Paris, 1956, p. 374. Le texte est daté: New York, 25 mars 1954.

Evangelisation und Marxismus

Gustav A. Wetter, S.J.

Für das Problem der Evangelisation in einer vom Marxismus geprägten oder doch wenigstens beeinflußten Umwelt ist die entscheidende Frage die, ob Marxismus und Atheismus untrennbar mit einander verbunden sind. Diese Frage ist vor allem philosophischer Natur. Das Problem des Verhältnisses von Marxismus und Religion könnte auch auf verschiedenen anderen Ebenen gestellt werden: etwa auf der soziologischen Ebene, wie es z. B. kommt, daß der Marxismus in Ländern mit überwiegend katholischer oder orthodoxer Bevölkerung weitere Verbreitung gefunden hat als etwa in protestantischen Ländern, oder auf der psychologischen Ebene, wie es zu erklären ist, daß der Marxismus selbst, besonders für Jugendliche, oft zu einer Art Religionsersatz oder Pseudoreligion wird; dann auf der politischen Ebene, warum der Marxismus in allen Ländern, wo er die politische Macht erlangt hat, in den Religionsgemeinschaften einen seiner gefährlichsten Gegner sieht und, in den verschiedenen Ländern in verschiedenem Grade, denselben einen nicht nur ideologischen sondern auch einen mit Einsatz staatlicher Machtmittel geführten Kampf ansagt. Jedoch sind alle diese Fragestellungen im Vergleich zu der ersten mehr sekundärer Natur. Wir wollen uns daher in dieser Studie auf die Frage beschränken, ob die marxistische Theorie den Atheismus als einen Wesensbestandteil in sich schließt, sodaß die prinzipielle Anerkennung der Religion als eines authentisch menschlichen Wertes einer Selbstaufgabe des Marxismus gleichkäme.

Auf den ersten Blick könnte es scheinen, daß die Antwort auf diese Frage sehr leicht ist: Der Marxismus bekennt sich zum Materialismus und ist daher wesentlich atheistisch und mit der Religion unvereinbar. In Wirklichkeit verhält sich die Sache jedoch nicht so einfach.

Die Schwierigkeit kommt daher, daß es sehr schwer auszumachen ist, was eigentlich Marxismus ist. Vor einigen Jahren erschien in Deutschland ein Buch mit dem Titel « Schulen des Marxismus »[1]. Der Verfasser, ein hervorragender Kenner des Marxismus, behandelt darin an die zwanzig Spielarten dieser Lehre. Schon daraus wird sichtbar, daß es in der Gegenwart innerhalb des Marxismus einen starken Pluralismus von verschiedenen Richtungen und Strömungen gibt, die sich oft sehr beträchtlich von einander unterscheiden.

Wenn wir von den schon der Vergangenheit angehörenden Richtungen absehen und uns auf die Gegenwart beschränken, so wären zunächst die verschiedenen Spielarten des demokratischen Sozialismus und der Sozialdemokratie zu nennen, soweit sich diese überhaupt noch zum Marxismus bekennen; dann als die vielleicht wichtigste Form, der Marxismus-Leninismus oder Kommunismus, der in den verschiedenen Ländern oft ein sehr verschiedenes Gepräge aufweist als Titoismus, Maoismus u. ä.; dann der Castrismus, der Trotzkismus, die verschiedenen Formen dessen, was als « Reformkommunismus » bezeichnet wird, zu dem Autoren und Strömungen gerechnet werden, die wohl im allgemeinen auf dem Boden des Marxismus-Leninismus stehen, jedoch in einzelnen Punkten vom orthodoxen Marxismus-Leninismus sowjetischen Typs stark abweichen (hier wären etwa die Anhänger des « italienischen Weges zum Sozialismus » zu nennen, auch die Leute um Dubček in der Tschechoslowakei, die 1968 den « Prager Frühling » bestimmten, gewisse Kreise in Jugoslawien u.a.); schließlich eine Reihe einzelner Denker, die den Marxismus auf eine sehr individuelle Weise verstehen und oft als « Neomarxisten » bezeichnet werden (E. Bloch, H. Marcuse, R. Garaudy u. a.). Dies zeigt, daß es heute völlig unzulässig ist, von d e m Marxismus zu sprechen, und daß auch unsere Frage, inwieweit d e r Marxismus atheistisch ist, in sehr differenzierter Weise angegangen werden muß. In all dieser Vielfalt von Richtungen ist für unsere Fragestellung von besonderer Bedeutung, ob sie den Marxismus als Weltanschauung verstehen oder bloß als eine rein wirtschaftliche und politische Lehre oder auch,

[1] Günter Bartsch, *Schulen des Marxismus*, Kammweg Verlag, Troisdorf 1970.

was heute oft der Fall ist, einfach als eine positive Wissenschaft wie Mathematik, Biologie oder Medizin.

Dazu kommt eine weitere Schwierigkeit. Sie liegt in der für unsere Frage sehr bedeutsamen Tatsache, daß Marx selbst besonders in philosophischer Hinsicht eine gewisse Entwicklung durchgemacht hat, die es mit sich bringt, daß man auch nicht von d e r Lehre von Marx sprechen kann, daß es vielmehr notwendig ist zu unterscheiden, von welcher Entwicklungsphase man spricht. Es handelt sich hier vor allem um die Problematik des Verhältnisses von jungem und reifem Marx.

Es ist natürlich ein Ding der Unmöglichkeit, in dieser Studie eine Charakteristik all dieser verschiedenen Spielarten des Marxismus versuchen zu wollen. Dies ist für das uns beschäftigende Problem auch gar nicht notwendig. Es können zunächst einmal alle Versionen des Marxismus außer Betracht bleiben, die den Marxismus nicht als Weltanschauung, sondern nur als eine wirtschaftliche und soziale Lehre ansehen. Und was jene Richtungen innerhalb des Marxismus betrifft, für die der Marxismus auch eine philosophische und weltanschauliche Komponente aufweist, lassen sie sich auf drei Haupttendenzen zurückführen: eine humanistisch-anthropologische Richtung, die an den jungen Marx anknüpft, dann die orthodox marxistisch-leninistische Richtung, die außer dem historischen Materialismus auch den vor allem von Engels ausgearbeiteten und dann von Lenin übernommenen dialektischen Materialismus als die philosophische Grundlage des Marxismus anerkennt, und schließlich alle jene Strömungen, deren philosophische Grundlage sich auf den historischen Materialismus beschränkt.

Es war eben vom Humanismus des jungen Marx, vom historischen Materialismus und vom dialektischen Materialismus als von drei Formen marxistischer Weltanschauung die Rede. Es sind dies, grob gesprochen, drei verschiedene Etappen in der Ausarbeitung der marxistischen Theorie durch deren Begründer Marx und Engels. Entstehungsgeschichtlich ist jene Richtung, die wir als den Humanismus des jungen Marx bezeichneten, an die erste Stelle zu setzen. Unter dem « jungen Marx » versteht man gewöhnlich den Marx vor 1848, und die Schriften aus jener Zeit bezeichnet man als die « Frühschriften ». Es waren jedoch vor allem die Jahre 1843-1845, in denen er sich mit Fragen einer

philosophischen Anthropologie beschäftigte, mit Problemen des Humanismus, der Entfremdung des Menschen u. ä. Schon um 1845/1846 beginnt diese Entwicklungsphase im Denken von Marx abgelöst zu werden von der Konzeption, die später als « materialistische Geschichtsauffassung » oder auch als « historischer Materialismus » bezeichnet wurde und die zur Grundlage für die gesamte marxistische Gesellschaftslehre wurde. Erst gut 30 Jahre später, nämlich in den Siebziger Jahren des vergangenen Jahrhunderts begann Engels mit der Ausarbeitung einer allgemein philosophischen Grundlage für die marxistische Gesellschaftslehre, die dann den Namen « dialektischer Materialismus » erhielt.

Wir müssen nun jede einzelne dieser drei Denkrichtungen im Marxismus etwas eingehender ins Auge fassen. Zunächst einiges über den Humanismus des jungen Marx. Als dessen Hauptquelle gelten seine « Ökonomisch-philosophischen Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844 », nach dem Abfassungsort auch kurz als « Pariser Manuskripte » bezeichnet. Wie der Name schon andeutet, handelt es sich um eine von Marx selbst nie veröffentlichte, fragmentarische Schrift. Sie wurde erst 1932 aus seinem Nachlaß veröffentlicht und erregte sofort unter den Marx-Forschern lebhaftestes Interesse. Vielen schien mit ihr ein ganz neuer Marx sichtbar geworden zu sein, da bis dahin Marx gewöhnlich nur als Politiker und Wirtschaftswissenschaftler galt.

Welches ist nun der Inhalt der Marxschen Anthropologie und im besonderen seiner Theorie der Entfremdung des Menschen? Wie viele seiner Zeitgenossen ist Marx durch die Feststellung beunruhigt, daß in der Gegenwart der Mensch mehr und mehr zum Sklaven seiner eigenen Werke wird. Auf allen Gebieten seines Schaffens, im wirtschaftlichen, gesellschaftlichen, politischen und ideologischen Bereich, werden die vom Menschen geschaffenen Werke zu Mächten, die sich mehr und mehr der Kontrolle ihres Schöpfers entziehen, ihn versklaven und in seiner Existenz bedrohen. Wie kann diese entmenschte Welt, in der die Dinge herrschen, wieder zu einer Welt von Menschen werden, wo der Mensch herrscht und wo die gegenseitigen Beziehungen zwischen den Menschen nicht verdinglicht, sondern vermenschlicht sind? Feuerbach hatte diese « Entfremdung » des Menschen aus dem Phänomen der Religion hergeleitet. In der Religion, besonders der christlichen, setzt sich der Mensch sein

eigenes Wesen im Begriffe « Gott » als ein anderes Wesen entgegen, das er idealisiert, auf das er alles überträgt, was er gerne sein möchte, aber tatsächlich nicht ist. Er nennt dieses sein entfremdetes Wesen Gott und unterwirft sich ihm. Je mehr er auf dieses Wesen überträgt, umso weniger behält er für sich zurück[2]. Um also den wirklichen, seiner selbst mächtigen Menschen zu schaffen, gelte es, diese Entfremdung des Menschen aufzuheben.

Marx übernimmt von Feuerbach diese Wesensbestimmung der Religion. Er geht aber weiter als Feuerbach. Er stellt sich noch die Frage, wie es denn zu dieser Entfremdung des Menschen in der Religion komme, und er glaubt den Grund dafür in einer ähnlichen Entfremdung gefunden zu haben, die sich auf wirtschaftlichem und gesellschaftlichem Gebiet abspielt. Der Mensch schafft sich in der Religion deshalb ein verkehrtes Welt*bewußtsein*, weil er in seinem (gesellschaftlichen) *Sein* eine solche verkehrte Welt darstellt[3]. Wie kommt es jedoch zu dieser Entfremdung des Menschen auf gesellschaftlichem Gebiet? Was bedeutet überhaupt « Entfremdung » des Menschen? Von Entfremdung kann man ja nur dann sprechen, wenn man einen Begriff vom echten Wesen des Menschen hat. Worin sieht aber Marx dieses Wesen des Menschen?

Bei der Bestimmung des Wesens des Menschen zeigt sich nun Marx auch wieder ganz als Kind seiner Zeit. Hatte man im Idealismus das Wesen des Menschen immer auf die eine oder andere Weise in der freien Selbstbestimmung gesehen, so wendet Marx diesen Gedanken ins Materialistische und sieht das Wesen des Menschen in einem dialektischen Selbsterzeugungsprozeß, der sich in der Produktion der zum Leben nötigen materiellen Dinge, also in der Arbeit, vollzieht. Pro-duzieren bedeutet für Marx, etwas aus sich heraussetzen. So läßt in der Arbeit der arbeitende Mensch seine eigenen Wesenskräfte in Gestalt des Produktes gegenständliche Wirklichkeit werden. Zugleich verwirklicht er im Produkt seiner Arbeit ein Projekt, das er vorher in seinem Kopfe konzipierte. So wird die Arbeit zu einer Selbstdarstellung, zu einer Vergegenständlichung, Objektivierung des

[2] Vgl. Ludwig Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, Sämtliche Werke, Band 6, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1960, S. 17, 41.

[3] Vgl. Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie*. Einleitung, in: K. Marx - F. Engels, Werke, Band 1, Berlin 1957, S. 378.

schaffenden Menschen. Marx nennt dieses Moment auch den « Naturalismus des Menschen », da sich dieser dabei gewissermaßen mit der Natur einläßt. In dieser Selbstdarstellung des Menschen in der von ihm bearbeiteten Natur vollzieht sich zugleich eine fortschreitende Humanisierung der Natur. So sind für Marx « Naturalismus des Menschen » und « Humanismus der Natur » eigentlich nur zwei Seiten ein und desselben Prozesses. Auf diese Objektivierung des Menschen folgt dann ein Moment der « Wiederzurücknahme » des entäußerten Wesens des Menschen. Marx spricht von einer « Entgegenständlichung ». Diese ist darin gelegen, daß der Mensch das Produkt seiner Hände als Lebensmittel zur Fristung seiner natürlichen Existenz benützt. So erweist sich die Arbeit als Prozeß der Selbsterzeugung des Menschen, und zwar als ein dialektischer Prozeß, sofern sich diese Selbsterzeugung und Selbstverwirklichung auf dem Wege einer Selbstentäußerung, einer « Vergegenständlichung » und « Entgegenständlichung » vollzieht.

In der gegenwärtigen, auf Arbeitsteilung und Privateigentum beruhenden Gesellschaftsform wird jedoch das vom arbeitenden Menschen erzeugte Produkt — und damit sein eigenes objektiviertes Wesen — privater Besitz eines anderen. Es bleibt damit nicht nur im Zustand der Objektivation fixiert, sondern wird überdies — in Gestalt des Kapitals — zu einer dem unmittelbar Produzierenden feindlichen und ihn bedrückenden Macht. « Je mehr der Arbeiter sich ausarbeitet, um so mächtiger wird die fremde, gegenständliche Welt, die er sich gegenüber schafft, um so ärmer wird er selbst, seine innre Welt, um so weniger gehört ihm zu eigen »[1]. In dieser « Entfremdung des Menschen vom Produkt seiner Arbeit » sieht nun Marx die grundlegendste Form aller Entfremdung, aus der eine Reihe weiterer Formen ihren Ursprung nimmt. Als nächste ist die Entfremdung des Menschen von seiner Arbeit selbst zu nennen. Sie äußert sich darin, daß der Mensch in der gegenwärtigen Gesellschaftsordnung die Arbeit, die ihm ja als Prozeß der Selbsterzeugung zum ersten Lebensbedürfnis werden müßte, als drückende Last empfindet; so kommt es, daß er sich in der Arbeit unglücklich und erst außerhalb der Arbeit glücklich und bei sich selbst fühlt. Diese

[1] *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844*, in: K. Marx - F. Engels, Werke, Ergänzungsband, 1. Teil, Berlin 1968, S. 512.

« Entfremdung des Arbeiters von der Arbeit » wird des weiteren auch zu seiner « Selbstentfremdung », da ja, wie wir sahen, die Arbeit für Marx das eigentliche Wesen des Menschen ausmacht. Wenn Marx jedoch hier vom Menschen spricht, so ist zu beachten, daß er dabei immer an das denkt, was er den « gesellschaftlichen Menschen » nennt, das Wesen des Menschen bedeutet für ihn ein « Gattungswesen ». Selbstentfremdung wird auf diese Weise notwendig auch noch zur Entfremdung der Menschen untereinander, zur Entfremdung des Menschen von dem Menschen; sie äußert sich darin, daß in der auf dem Privateigentum begründeten Ordnung die Beziehungen der Menschen untereinander entmenscht werden; sie hören auf, personale Beziehungen zu sein, und gestalten sich nach der Art von Sachbeziehungen. Und schließlich wirken sich alle diese Formen von Entfremdung des Menschen noch im politischen Bereich aus, wo sich der gesellschaftliche Mensch sein eigenes gesellschaftliches Leben in Gestalt des Staates als ein Fremdes entgegensetzt; des weiteren auch im geistigen Bereich, wo wie wir schon sahen, der Mensch sich in der Religion sein eigenes Wesen im Gottesbegriff als ein fremdes, ihn beherrschendes Wesen entgegensetzt.

Um also den wahren Menschen zu verwirklichen genügt es nicht, wie Feuerbach wollte, die religiöse Entfremdung zu beseitigen. Die Axt ist an die Wurzel aller Entfremdung zu legen, die Marx im Privateigentum sah. Dies geschieht durch die proletarische Revolution und durch die Verwirklichung des Kommunismus. Der Kommunismus bedeutet somit für Marx nicht nur die Beseitigung der Ausbeutung des Menschen durch den Menschen, sondern die Überwindung aller Art von Entfremdung des Menschen. Er bedeutet nicht nur die Überwindung des Widerstreits zwischen Mensch und Mensch, sondern darüber hinaus auch die Überwindung des Widerstreites zwischen Mensch und Natur! Erst durch die Beseitigung aller Entfremdung des Menschen kann auch die in der Produktionstätigkeit sich vollziehende Humanisierung der Natur vollkommen zur Auswirkung kommen. Der Kommunismus ist daher für Marx « als vollendeter Naturalismus = Humanismus, als vollendeter Humanismus = Naturalismus, er ist die wahrhafte Auflösung des Widerstreits zwischen dem Menschen mit der Natur und mit dem Menschen, die wahrhafte Auflösung des Streits zwischen Existenz und Wesen, zwischen Vergegenständlichung und Selbstbetäti-

gung, zwischen Freiheit und Notwendigkeit, zwischen Individuum und Gattung. Er ist das aufgelöste Rätsel der Geschichte und weiß sich als diese Lösung »[5].

Dies wäre in groben Umrissen die Anthropologie mit der Theorie von der Entfremdung des Menschen im Denken des jungen Marx. Aus der zuletzt zitierten Stelle aus den Pariser Manuskripten wird in besonderer Weise deutlich, daß für den jungen Marx « Kommunismus » viel mehr bedeutete als ein bestimmtes Wirtschaftssystem und auch mehr als eine besondere Gesellschaftsform. Er ist für Marx die Lösung aller menschlichen Probleme schlechthin oder, wie er es nennt, « das aufgelöste Rätsel der Geschichte ». Gerade dadurch wird ersichtlich, daß diese seine Lehre ausgesprochen weltanschaulichen Charakter hat, was in unserem Zusammenhang von besonderer Bedeutung ist. Inwiefern sie atheistischen Charakter hat, davon wird noch die Rede sein.

Diese Manuskripte blieben, wie schon erwähnt, unveröffentlicht. Der Grund dafür war wohl unter anderem auch der, daß manches an dieser Sicht für Marx selbst sehr bald problematisch wurde, insbesondere die Auffassung von einem idealen « Wesen » des Menschen, und im Zusammenhang damit vieles aus seiner Entfremdungslehre. In seinem Denken vollzog sich bald nach Niederschrift dieser Manuskripte ein starker Wandel, in dessen Gefolge das entstand, was wir die « materialistische Geschichtsauffassung » nennen. Ihr Grundgedanke, daß das gesamte gesellschaftliche Leben letztlich vom Wirtschaftlichen her bestimmt wird, lag auch der Entfremdungslehre schon zu Grunde. Wir sahen ja dort, daß die Entfremdung des Menschen in der Sphäre des Bewußtseins durch seine Entfremdung in der gesellschaftlichen Sphäre bedingt ist, und diese ihrerseits durch die Entfremdung im Bereich der Arbeit, d.h. der Wirtschaft. Wir können nun nicht im Einzelnen auf die gesamte Entstehungsgeschichte der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung eingehen. In ihrem wesentlichen Gehalt findet sie sich schon in dem von Marx gemeinsam mit Engels in den Jahren 1845/46 abgefaßten Werke « Die deutsche Ideologie ». Eine als « klassisch » bezeichnete prägnante Formulierung gab ihr Marx jedoch in der Einleitung zu seiner Schrift aus dem Jahre 1859 « Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie ». Wegen der Wichtigkeit dieses Textes für die marxistische Ideologie aller Schattierungen seien hier die Kernsätze im Wortlaut angeführt:

[5] A. a. O., S. 536.

> « In der gesellschaftlichen Produktion ihres Lebens gehen die Menschen bestimmte, notwendige, von ihrem Willen unabhängige Verhältnisse ein, Produktionsverhältnisse, die einer bestimmten Entwicklungsstufe ihrer materiellen Produktivkräfte entsprechen. Die Gesamtheit dieser Produktionsverhältnisse bildet die ökonomische Struktur der Gesellschaft, die reale Basis, worauf sich ein juristischer und politischer Überbau erhebt, und welcher bestimmte gesellschaftliche Bewußtseinsformen entsprechen. Die Produktionsweise des materiellen Lebens bedingt den sozialen, politischen und geistigen Lebensprozeß überhaupt. Es ist nicht das Bewußtsein der Menschen, das ihr Sein, sondern umgekehrt ihr gesellschaftliches Sein, das ihr Bewußtsein bestimmt »[6].

Der Grundgedanke, den Marx hier zum Ausdruck bringt, liegt in dem Satz beschlossen: « Die Produktionsweise des materiellen Lebens bedingt den sozialen, politischen und geistigen Lebensprozeß überhaupt ». Damit will er, entgegen verschiedenen zu seiner Zeit vorherrschenden Geschichtskonzeptionen sagen, daß die Geschichte letztlich nicht von Ideen, auch nicht von politischen Machtkämpfen, sei es zwischen Staaten oder Parteien innerhalb der Staaten, bestimmt wird. Solche Machtkämpfe sind durch soziale Konflikte, und diese ihrerseits durch die Wirtschaftsstruktur bestimmt oder, wie Marx es nennt, durch die « Produktionsweise ». Die Produktionsweise ist nicht zu allen Zeiten dieselbe gewesen, anders war sie im Altertum, anders zur Zeit des Feudalismus, wieder anders im Kapitalismus. Sie erhält nach Marx ihr Gepräge durch zwei Faktoren: einerseits durch das, was er als die « materiellen Produktivkräfte » bezeichnet, vor allem die Arbeitswerkzeuge und die Produktionstechnik, andererseits durch die sogenannten gesellschaftlichen « Produktionsverhältnisse », unter denen die wichtigsten die Klassenverhältnisse sind. Weil diese für Marx das gesamte politische und auch geistige Leben der Gesellschaft bedingen, bezeichnet er sie als « Basis » und das politische und geistige Leben als « Überbau ». Im « Überbau » unterscheidet er zwei Bereiche: einmal den

[6] K. Marx, *Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*, in: K. Marx - F. Engels, Werke, Band 13, Berlin 1961, S. 8 f.

politischen Überbau: Staat, Recht, Parteien usw., der in einem unmittelbaren Abhängigkeitsverhältnis zur Basis steht, und dann den Bereich des geistigen Lebens der Gesellschaft, oder den sog. « ideologischen Überbau »: Moral, Kunst, Philosophie, zum Teil auch die Wissenschaft und die Religion. Ein anderer häufig verwendeter Name für die einzelnen Formen des ideologischen Überbaues ist auch « Formen des gesellschaftlichen Bewußtseins ». Die Abhängigkeit des Überbaues von der Basis sieht Marx vor allem darin, daß in ihm irgend welche soziale und ökonomische Gegebenheiten ihren Ausdruck finden. So ist für ihn z.B. das Recht nichts anderes als der zum Gesetz erhobene Wille der herrschenden Klasse und spiegelt ihre Interessen wider. Daraus ergibt sich, daß in der Klassengesellschaft die verschiedenen Formen des gesellschaftlichen Bewußtseins Klassencharakter haben und Klasseninteressen widerspiegeln. Im Prinzip gilt all das nach Marx'scher und marxistischer Auffassung auch für die Religion.

Die Produktionsverhältnisse können, wie Marx in dem zitierten Passus zum Ausdruck bringt, nicht in willkürlicher Weise gestaltet werden, sie müssen in Einklang stehen mit dem Entwicklungsniveau der Produktivkräfte. Dies ist jedoch nicht immer der Fall. Die Entwicklung der Produktivkräfte schreitet in stetiger Weise voran, während die bestehende Gesellschaftsstruktur über einen größeren Zeitraum hinweg die gleiche bleibt. Dies muß mit der Zeit notwendig zu einem unhaltbaren Zustand führen. Marx beschreibt diesen Prozeß an der gleichen Stelle wie folgt:

> « Auf einer gewissen Stufe ihrer Entwicklung geraten die materiellen Produktivkräfte der Gesellschaft in Widerspruch mit den vorhandenen Produktionsverhältnissen oder, was nur ein juristischer Ausdruck dafür ist, mit den Eigentumsverhältnissen, innerhalb deren sie sich bisher bewegt hatten. Aus Entwicklungsformen der Produktivkräfte schlagen diese Verhältnisse in Fesseln derselben um. Es tritt dann eine Epoche sozialer Revolution ein. Mit der Veränderung der ökonomischen Grundlage wälzt sich der ganze ungeheure Überbau langsamer oder rascher um. In der Betrachtung solcher Umwälzungen muß man stets unterscheiden zwischen der materiellen, naturwissenschaftlich treu zu konstatierenden Umwälzung in den ökonomischen Produktionsbedingungen und den juristischen, politischen, religiösen, künstlerischen oder philosophischen, kurz, ideologischen Formen, worin sich die Menschen dieses Konfliktes bewußt werden und ihn ausfechten »[7].

Die geschichtliche Entwicklung der menschlichen Gesellschaft vollzieht sich demnach in einem ständigen Auftreten von Widersprüchen und ihrer Lösung, mit anderen Worten, sie hat einen dialektischen Charakter. Und weil in dieser Marxschen Sicht die Produktionsweise, d.h. das sog. « materielle Leben der Gesellschaft » es ist, wodurch die Entwicklung ausgelöst wird, und weil ihr sog. « geistiges Leben », die verschiedenen Formen des gesellschaftlichen Bewußtseins, in Abhängigkeit von ihrem materiellen Leben stehen, trägt diese Theorie den Namen « materialistische Geschichtsauffassung », auch « historischer Materialismus » genannt. Ob es sich dabei um einen wirklichen philosophischen Materialismus handelt und ob dieser Theorie daher notwendig ein atheistischer Charakter anhaftet, soll später untersucht werden.

Wie schon erwähnt, bewegte sich das Denken von Marx ungefähr seit 1845 auf dem Boden dieser materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung. Sie war im wesentlichen eine Gesellschaftstheorie und glaubte in der erwähnten Geschichtsdialektik das Grundgesetz der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung aufgedeckt zu haben. Etwa dreißig Jahre später unternahm Engels in den 70-er Jahren des vergangenen Jahrhunderts den Versuch nachzuweisen, daß nicht nur die Entwicklung der Gesellschaft, sondern auch die der Natur nach diesem Gesetz abläuft. Wie das materielle Leben der Gesellschaft ihr geistiges Leben bestimmt, so soll auch in der Natur aus der Entwicklung der Materie der Mensch mit seinem geistigen Bewußtsein entstanden sein. Und wie die Entwicklung der Gesellschaft durch das Entstehen und die Überwindung von Widersprüchen ausgelöst wird, so soll auch die Entwicklung der Natur einen ähnlichen dialektischen Charakter haben und durch Widersprüche bzw. einen Kampf von Gegensätzen bedingt sein. Im einzelnen formulierte Engels die bekannten drei Gesetze der materialistischen Dialektik: das Gesetz vom Übergang der Quantität in Qualität, das Gesetz von der Einheit und dem Kampf der Gegensätze[8] und das Gesetz der Negation

[7] A. a. O., S. 9.

[8] « Gesetz von der Einheit und dem Kampf der Gegensätze » ist der heute gebräuchliche Name; bei Engels hieß es noch « Gesetz von der

der Negation. Mit dieser seiner « Dialektik in der Natur » hat Engels die Grundlage zu dem gelegt, was wir heute den « dialektischen Materialismus » nennen. Diese wenigen Andeutungen können in unserem Zusammenhang genügen. Es ist hier nicht der Ort, auf Einzelheiten einzugehen.

Historischer und dialektischer Materialismus bilden zusammen die ideologische Grundlage des Sowjetmarxismus. Seine Anerkennung wird nicht nur den Mitgliedern der Kommunistischen Partei abverlangt, vielmehr stellt sich die sowjetische Führung das Ziel, die gesamte Bevölkerung in dieser Weltanschauung zu erziehen. Das gesamte kulturelle Leben kommunistisch regierter Staaten wird nach ihr ausgerichtet. Hingegen lehnen auch kommunistische Philosophen in westlichen Ländern vielfach den dialektischen Materialismus als philosophisch zu primitiv ab.

Der historische Materialismus ohne die Weiterentwicklung zum dialektischen Materialismus ist dagegen Gemeingut wohl aller oder wenigstens der weitaus meisten sich zum Marxismus bekennenden Strömungen. Am Humanismus des jungen Marx orientieren sich vor allem neomarxistische Denker, Marxisten der freien Welt und Vertreter des Reformkommunismus. Auch vereinzelte Philosophen in kommunistisch regierten Ländern legen ihn ihrem Denken zu Grunde, geraten damit aber in Schwierigkeiten mit dem Regime. Die offizielle Sowjetideologie begegnet nämlich dem jungen Marx mit einer gewissen Reserve [9], man

gegenseitigen Durchdringung der Gegensätze ». Vgl. F. Engels, *Dialektik der Natur*, in: K. Marx - F. Engels, Werke, Band 20, Berlin 1962, S. 348.

[9] Dies wird u. a. ersichtlich aus dem Vorwort, welches das Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim Zentralkomitee der Kommunistischen Partei der Sowjetunion dem ersten Band der « Werke » von Marx und Engels vorausschickte: « Einige vom idealistischen, linkshegelianischen Standpunkt aus verfaßte Frühschriften von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels wurden in den ersten Band der vorliegenden Ausgabe nicht aufgenommen ... Ebenfalls nicht aufgenommen wurde Marx' unvollendete Arbeit « Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844 ». Diese frühen Arbeiten von Marx und Engels, die für einen engen Kreis von Fachleuten von Interesse sind, werden in einem besonderen Sammelband erscheinen » (K. Marx - F. Engels, Werke, Band 1, Berlin 1957, S. XXXI). Der hier erwähnte Sammelband erschien 1956 in russischer Sprache: K. Marks - F. Engel's, *Iz rannich proizvedenij* (Aus den frühen Schriften), Moskau 1956. Offenbar wurden sich die Herausgeber der « Werke » bewußt, mit der Nichtaufnahme dieser Schriften in den ersten Band einen faux pas begangen zu haben und veröffentlichten sie dann im Ergänzungsband, erster Teil. Die hier erwähnten Schriften von Marx und Engels waren früher schon in der 1927 vom Marx-Engels-Institut in Moskau unter der

ist der Ansicht, daß sich Marx in seinen Frühschriften noch nicht ganz vom Hegelianismus losgelöst hat, und mißt diesen Schriften nur insofern Bedeutung bei, als sich in ihnen schon Elemente der Lehre des reifen Marx vorfinden. Aber nicht nur der Sowjetmarxismus begegnet dem jungen Marx mit einer solchen Reserve. Auch Althusser, der Initiator des marxistischen Strukturalismus in Frankreich, lehnt den Humanismus des jungen Marx ab; hier habe Marx noch auf dem Boden der « Ideologie », noch nicht auf dem der Wissenschaft gestanden [10].

Auf Grund unserer bisherigen Überlegungen ist es uns nun schon möglich, in mehr differenzierter Weise an die Beantwortung der Frage heranzugehen, ob der Marxismus notwendig atheistisch sein muß. Die Antwort hängt entscheidend davon ab, welche Position die jeweils zur Diskussion stehende Spielart von Marxismus in weltanschaulicher Hinsicht einnimmt. Wenn eine marxistische Bewegung oder Partei auf dem Standpunkt stehen sollte, der Marxismus sei nichts weiter als eine rein wirtschaftliche, soziale und politische Theorie, so stellt sich das Problem überhaupt nicht.

Es bleibt also der atheistische Charakter jeder einzelnen der drei oben skizzierten Versionen der marxistischen Philosophie zu untersuchen. Wir wollen mit dem Humanismus des jungen Marx beginnen. Seine atheistische Grundhaltung wird schon darin sichtbar, daß Marx in seiner Entfremdungslehre einfach die These Feuerbachs übernimmt, daß es der Mensch ist, der Gott nach seinem Ebenbild erschuf. Auch die Bestimmung des Wesens des Menschen ist zutiefst atheistisch. Wenn Marx das Wesen des Menschen in einem dialektischen Selbsterzeugungsprozeß sieht, so ist damit ausgesagt, daß der Mensch nicht als Geschöpf Gottes zu verstehen ist, daß er vielmehr total und radikal auf sich selbst begründet werden soll. Es ist in diesem Sinne sehr bezeichnend, daß Marx in seinen Pariser Manuskripten den Atheismus im Sinne einer Leugnung Gottes als einen noch unvollkommenen Standpunkt betrachtet. Marx will den Menschen so radikal auf sich selbst begründet wissen, daß das Problem

Leitung von D. Rjazanov begonnenen Historisch-kritischen Gesamtausgabe (MEGA), Frankfurt a. M. (später Berlin) 1927 ff., veröffentlicht worden. Die Fortsetzung dieser Ausgabe wurde jedoch 1935, nachdem 12 Bände erschienen waren, von Stalin blockiert.

[10] Louis Althusser, *Pour Marx*, Paris, Maspero, 1965, p. 26.

« Gott » für ihn überhaupt nicht existiert und der Mensch nicht erst durch die Leugnung Gottes zu sich selbst finden muß [11]. Einen atheistischen Standpunkt von noch größerer Radikalität, als der, den der junge Marx bezog, kann man sich wohl kaum vorstellen.

Diese Feststellung ist in der Gegenwart von besonderer Aktualität, weil vielfach die Meinung vertreten wird, die Philosophie des jungen Marx sei ein für den christlich-marxistischen Dialog besonders geeigneter Boden, da christlicher Humanismus und marxistischer Humanismus am leichtesten zu einander finden können. Mag sein, daß auf diesem Boden am leichtesten eine Zusammenarbeit in der Lösung konkreter, die Lage des Menschen betreffender Probleme ermöglicht werden kann, allerdings unter der Voraussetzung einer absoluten Toleranz. Vom Standpunkt der Theorie hingegen steht gerade die Anthropologie des jungen Marx in radikalstem Gegensatz zur christlichen. Christliches Menschenbild und marxistisches Menschenbild, wie es vom jungen Marx entworfen wird, sind schlechthin unvereinbar.

Nicht besser steht es mit dem dialektischen Materialismus. Bei dem Unterfangen von Engels, die Dialektik aus dem gesellschaftlichen Bereich auch in den Bereich der Natur zu verlegen, scheint wohl auch das Bestreben Pate gestanden zu haben, der sozialistisch organisierten Arbeiterklasse eine eigene Weltanschauung zu geben. Diese Weltanschauung hat nun wiederum ausgesprochen atheistischen Charakter. Um der Annahme einer Weltschöpfung, und damit auch eines Schöpfers entgehen zu können, stellt der dialektische Materialismus die These von der Ewigkeit der Materie auf. Zur Begründung verweist er auf die Naturwissenschaft: die Ewigkeit der Welt soll angeblich durch die Wissenschaft erwiesen sein. Befragt man darüber die Naturwissenschaft selbst, so erhält man zur Antwort, daß diese Frage beim heutigen Stand der wissenschaftlichen Entwicklung unentscheidbar ist. Dennoch aber trägt der dialektische Materialismus diese seine Auffassung nicht als Hypothese, sondern als feststehende These vor. Er hält an ihr jedoch nicht auf Grund wirklicher Einsichten fest, sondern auf Grund einer willensmäßigen, aus einem rein atheistischen Affekt heraus gefällten Vorentscheidung.

[11] K. Marx, *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844*, p. 546.

Nicht so einfach liegen die Dinge mit dem historischen Materialismus. Auf den ersten Blick könnte es scheinen, daß auch sein atheistischer Charakter feststeht und daß auch er mit einem religiösen Standpunkt unvereinbar ist. Zur Rechtfertigung dieser Auffassung könnte zunächst schon die Tatsache ins Treffen geführt werden, daß er das geistige Leben aus der Wirtschaft, d.h. dem materiellen Leben der Gesellschaft herleitet. Dazu kommt dann noch, daß er in der Geschichte eine notwendige Gesetzmäßigkeit wirksam sein läßt, wodurch der Ablauf der Geschichte determiniert ist. Wo bleibt aber bei einem solchen Determinismus die menschliche Freiheit? Auch diese Sicht der Geschichte scheint mit der Religion unvereinbar zu sein. Und schließlich ist auch seine Auffassung von der Religion selbst, die er als Überbau erklärt und von sozial-ökonomischen Gegebenheiten bestimmt sein läßt, mit dem wahren Wesen der Religion unvereinbar, umso mehr, als unter all den verschiedenen Formen des Überbaus, bzw. des gesellschaftlichen Bewußtseins, die Religion die stiefmütterlichste Behandlung erfährt: Während in den anderen gesellschaftlichen Bewußtseinsformen, etwa in der Philosophie, auch schon für die Zeit vor Errichtung der sozialistischen klassenlosen Gesellschaft, und damit schon vor Überwindung der menschlichen Selbstentfremdung das Vorhandensein wahrer Elemente zugestanden wird, betrachtet man die Religion, seit Engels, als eine wesentlich phantastische Widerspiegelung der Wirklichkeit im Bewußtsein der Menschen, ihr kommt also überhaupt kein Wahrheitsgehalt zu [12].

Es kann nicht geleugnet werden, daß die meisten Marxisten die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung vielfach so verstanden und noch verstehen. Insbesondere bewegte sich am Ende des vergangenen und zu Beginn unseres Jahrhunderts die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Sozialdemokratie und Christentum auf dieser Ebene. Aber auch heute ist dieses Verständnis der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung noch nicht ganz überwunden. Jedoch ist zu sagen, daß diese Sicht zu vereinfacht ist.

Fassen wir zunächst einmal die Berufung auf den « materialistischen » Charakter dieser Geschichtsauffassung näher ins Auge. Er soll darin gelegen sein, daß das « geistige Leben » der

[12] Vgl. F. Engels, *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umkehrung der Wissenschaft*, in: K. Marx - F. Engels, Werke, Band 20, Berlin 1962, S. 294 f.

Gesellschaft aus ihrem « materiellen » Leben hergeleitet wird, d.h. aus der Produktionsweise der zum Leben nötigen materiellen Güter. Weil es also um die *materiellen* Güter geht, soll es sich hier um einen Materialismus handeln. Dies ist jedoch ein Mißverständnis. Nicht die materiellen Güter sind es, die das geistige Leben der Gesellschaft bestimmen, sondern die Art und Weise, wie sie produziert werden. « Produzieren » enthält jedoch immer schon auch eine geistige Komponente, und zwar als entscheidenden Faktor. Produzieren bedeutet, Mittel auf die Erlangung von Zielen hinzuordnen. Insbesondere in der heutigen Zeit ist Produzieren ohne Wissenschaft gar nicht denkbar. Wenn also die Produktionsweise als der in der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung entscheidende Faktor angenommen wird, so ist damit unausgesprochen schon ein Primat des Geistigen behauptet. Diese Geschichtsauffassung impliziert also durchaus nicht notwendig einen Materialismus im philosophischen Sinn. Deswegen wird vielfach der Name « ökonomische Geschichtsauffassung » bevorzugt.

Auch der Einwand, daß der in der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung enthaltene Determinismus die Freiheit des Menschen unmöglich mache, beruht auf einem Mißverständnis. Die vom Marxismus behauptete geschichtliche Notwendigkeit betrifft nämlich nur die große Linie des Geschichtsablaufs, insbesondere die Ablösung des Kapitalismus durch den Sozialismus. Diese Notwendigkeit bahnt sich ihren Weg durch eine Unmenge von Zufälligkeiten, Unregelmäßigkeiten und Abweichungen im Verhalten der Einzelmenschen. Es ist ähnlich wie mit den sog. « statistischen Gesetzen » in der Physik. Diese beziehen sich ebenfalls nicht auf das Verhalten etwa eines einzelnen Elementarteilchens, sondern drücken nur eine Gesetzmäßigkeit aus, die im Durchschnittsverhalten einer großen Menge von Einzelteilchen zu Tage tritt. So schließt auch der vom Marxismus behauptete Determinismus nicht die Möglichkeit aus, daß der Einzelmensch sich anders verhalte, als es dem Gang der Geschichte, wie ihn der Marxismus sieht, entspricht. Man kann, wenn man will, ein Fragezeichen hinter die Behauptung setzen, daß die Geschichte tatsächlich in ihrer großen Linie den vom Marxismus behaupteten Gang nimmt, jedoch wäre der Vorwurf nicht berechtigt, daß durch die Annahme einer notwendigen Linie im Gesamtablauf die Willensfreiheit der individuellen Persönlichkeit nicht mehr möglich wäre.

Somit kann auch aus dem marxistischen Geschichtsdeterminismus kein unbedingter Gegensatz zur Religion abgeleitet werden. Es bleibt noch seine Auffassung von der Religion als Überbau. Es kann nicht geleugnet werden, daß diese These von den meisten so verstanden wird, daß die Religion als Produkt ungerechter sozialer Verhältnisse entstanden ist und dementsprechend von selbst wieder absterben wird, sobald eine menschenwürdige Gesellschaftsordnung verwirklicht sein wird. Eine solche Einschätzung der Religion setzt offenkundig einen atheistischen Standpunkt voraus.

Die Frage ist jedoch die, ob die sog. materialistische Geschichtsauffassung keine andere Deutung zuläßt. Und in diesem Zusammenhang ist die Entwicklung interessant, die die Auffassung vom gesellschaftlichen Bewußtsein in der marxistischen Philosophie seit den Frühschriften von Marx durchgemacht hat. Für den jungen Marx stellte nicht nur die Religion eine Form von « falschem Bewußtsein » ohne Wahrheitsgehalt dar, sondern auch Metaphysik, überhaupt die Philosophie, Recht und Moral, wobei er solchen Aufzählungen gewöhnlich ein « usw. » folgen ließ. Das, was in späterer Terminologie als « Überbau » bezeichnet wurde, hatte ursprünglich im Denken von Marx den Charakter von « Ideologie » im Sinne von « falschen Bewußtsein ».

Erst die spätere marxistische Theorie begann innerhalb der einzelnen Formen des gesellschaftlichen Bewußtseins, d.h. innerhalb dessen, was als « Überbau » bezeichnet wird, zwischen wahren und falschen Gehalten zu unterscheiden. Nur als Ausdruck der Interessen der herrschenden Klasse stellen z.B. Moral, Recht usw. falsches Bewußtsein dar. Die in einer gewissen Zeit vorherrschenden rechtlichen und moralischen Normen werden zwar im Namen einer allgemein gültigen höheren Gerechtigkeit verkündet, stellen aber in Wirklichkeit nichts anderes dar als die Sanktionierung und zugleich Verschleierung der Interessen der herrschenden Klasse. Anders verhält es sich mit der proletarischen Moral und überhaupt mit dem proletarischen Klassenbewußtsein. Die Arbeiterklasse hat keine Veranlassung zur Schönfärberei, da sie nicht selbst unterdrückt, sondern unterdrückt wird. Sie kann die Wirklichkeit sehen, wie sie ist, ihre Ideologie ist nicht mehr falsches, sondern wahres Bewußtsein. Man begann

also innerhalb der einzelnen gesellschaftlichen Bewußtseinsformen, also innerhalb der Philosophie, innerhalb der Moral, innerhalb der Kunst usw., zwischen wahren und ideologischen, d.h. interessenbedingten Gehalten zu unterscheiden.

Die neuere Sowjetphilosophie ging auf diesem Wege noch weiter und schränkte auch die Auffassung vom Klassencharakter des gesellschaftlichen Bewußtseins merklich ein. Seit etwa 15 Jahren wird offen zugegeben, daß nicht alles im gesellschaftlichen Bewußtsein klassenbedingt ist. Gewissen Kunstwerken z. B. kann eine überzeitliche, allgemein menschliche Bedeutung nicht abgesprochen werden. Wir brauchen nur an die Werkte etwa eines Raffael oder Michelangelo zu denken. Ebenso ist auch in der Moral nicht alles klassenbedingt. Es gibt eine allgemein menschliche Moral, die zu allen Zeiten ihre Gültigkeit hatte und hat, wenn auch ihre Forderungen vielfach mit Füßen getreten und bis zur Unkenntlichkeit entstellt wurden [13].

Man begann also innerhalb der einzelnen gesellschaftlichen Bewußtseinsformen zwischen wahren und ideologischen, interessenmäßig entstellten Gehalten zu unterscheiden. Nur bei der Religion macht man immer noch eine Ausnahme. Ihr soll überhaupt kein Wahrheitsgehalt zukommen, sie ist eine Bewußtseinsform, die die Wirklichkeit wesentlich in entstellter Form wiedergibt. Warum? Dafür wird kein plausibler Grund angegeben, es ist dies offenkundig immer noch eine Nachwirkung des seit eh und je dem Marxismus innewohnenden antireligiösen Affektes.

Diese Einschätzung der Religion ist jedoch eine offenkundige Inkonsequenz. Wenn man schon die Religion als eine eigene, spezifische Form des gesellschaftlichen Bewußtseins, also als eine eigene Form des « Überbaues » anerkennt, dann muß doch für sie dasselbe gelten, was für die anderen gilt. Dann muß man auch innerhalb der Religion zwischen wahren und ideologisch entstellten Gehalten unterscheiden, dann muß man auch innerhalb der Religion gewisse Elemente gelten lassen, die nicht klassenbedingt sind, sondern allgemein menschliche Gültigkeit besitzen. Daß es innerhalb der Religion gewisse zeitbedingte,

[13] So z. B. im « Programm der Kommunistischen Partei der Sowjetunion » von 1961, in: Boris Meissner, *Das Parteiprogramm der KPdSU 1903 bis 1961*, Köln 1962, S. 227.

auch interessenbedingte Elemente gibt, dies zuzugestehen besteht keine Schwierigkeit. Es werden sicher oft im Namen der Religion Forderungen erhoben, hinter denen sich in Wirklichkeit handfeste Interessen verbergen. Dabei muß es sich jedoch nicht unbedingt um wirtschaftliche Interessen handeln. Darin aber erschöpft sich das Wesen der Religion in keiner Weise.

Wir sehen also, daß ein Marxismus, der weltanschaulich nur auf dem Boden des historischen Materialismus steht, ohne auch den dialektischen Materialismus oder die Anthropologie des jungen Marx anzunehmen, die Möglichkeit hätte, falls er es wollte, in ein positives Verhältnis zur Religion zu kommen und auch in ihr einen authentischen menschlichen Wert, und nicht nur den Ausdruck der Entfremdung des Menschen, zu sehen. Damit soll nicht gesagt sein, daß es heute *tatsächlich* schon eine solche Form von Marxismus gibt, die die Religion als solche als echten menschlichen Wert gelten läßt. Wenn moderne Marxisten manchmal die Religion positiv werten, dann machen sie gewöhnlich die Einschränkung, daß diese « unter gewissen Umständen » eine positive gesellschaftliche Rolle spielen kann, sofern religiöse Menschen aus ihr einen Stimulus erhalten, sich sozial zu engagieren und gegen Ungerechtigkeit anzukämpfen. Dies bedeutet jedoch noch kein *grundsätzlich* positives Verhältnis zur Religion. Entgegen einer solchen noch zu negativen Einschätzung der Religion soll hier die These vertreten werden, daß der Marxismus, sofern er nur auf dem Boden der sog. materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung steht, ohne sich auch zum dialektischen Materialismus zu bekennen, von dieser seiner Lehre her nicht zwingend auf eine atheitstische Haltung verpflichtet ist, ja, daß er an seiner feindlichen Haltung der Religion gegenüber inkonsequenter Weise festhält, seit er begonnen hat, Elemente von allgemein menschlicher Gültigkeit in den übrigen Formen des gesellschaftlichen Bewußtseins gelten zu lassen. Das bedeutet nicht, daß ein Marxist unbedingt selbst religiös werden müßte. Ähnlich wie ein künstlerisch unbegabter Mensch die Kunst als einen echten kulturellen Wert anzuerkennen vermag, so müßte es auch möglich sein, daß ein Marxist, der vielleicht selbst keinen Zugang zur Transzendenz findet, die Religion als einen authentisch menschlichen Wert anerkenne.

Alle unsere bisherigen Erwägungen bewegten sich auf der Ebene der Theorie, ob der Marxismus notwendig atheistisch sein

muß. Es erhebt sich hier aber spontan die Frage, wie es sich mit der Praxis verhält, ob eine marxistische Partei, selbst wenn sie auf dem Boden des historischen und dialektischen Materialismus steht, von ihrer theoretischen Grundlage her verpflichtet ist, einen aktiven Kampf gegen die Religion zu führen. Und für den Fall, daß diese Frage zu verneinen ist, warum es dennoch immer wieder zu einem solchen praktischen Kampf kommt.

Die Antwort auf die erste Frage ist leicht zu geben. Ein aktiver Kampf gegen die Religion ist weder auf Grund der Entfremdungslehre, noch auf Grund des dialektischen Materialismus, noch auch auf Grund der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung Gebot. In all diesen verschiedenen Spielarten der marxistischen Theorie ist die Religion Ausdruck der Entfremdung des Menschen, bzw. Produkt unmenschlicher gesellschaftlicher Verhältnisse. Sie wird von selbst absterben, sobald die Gesellschaft vermenschlicht ist. Daraus ergibt sich unmittelbar, daß ein Marxist von seiner Theorie her durchaus die Möglichkeit hätte, eine abwartende Haltung einzunehmen und es der Geschichte zu überlassen, die Religion zum Absterben zu bringen.

In der Wirklichkeit nehmen jedoch die Marxisten, dort wo sie an der Macht sind, eine ganz andere Haltung der Religion gegenüber ein. Es wird zwar Religionsfreiheit verkündet, trotzdem sorgt man aber mit Hilfe von allerlei administrativen und gesetzlichen Maßnahmen dafür, daß die Religion keine zu große Vitalität entfalten könne. Besonders seit der Liquidierung des « Prager Frühlings » hat sich der Kampf gegen die Religion in den kommunistisch regierten Ländern stark verschärft. Worin liegt wohl die Ursache für einen solchen Widerspruch zwischen Theorie und Praxis?

Die Kommunisten behaupten, der Grund für ihren aktiven Kampf gegen die Religion liege in einem politischen Widerstand seitens der Kirche. Dies entspricht jedoch offenkundig nicht den Tatsachen. Die russische Kirche verhält sich mindestens seit dreißig Jahren absolut loyal dem Regime gegenüber. Dennoch aber hat der administrative Druck der Behörden auf Kirche und Gläubige in den letzten Jahren ständig zugenommen.

Der Grund für diese administrative Bekämpfung der Religion scheint vielmehr ein ganz anderer zu sein. Die Kommunistische Partei versteht sich als alleinige führende Kraft in der sozialistischen Gesellschaft. Dieses Machtmonopol beruht jedoch

theoretisch auf dem dialektischen und historischen Materialismus und praktisch darauf, daß diese Weltanschauung die in ihrem Machtbereich herrschende ist. Würde sich die Partei grundsätzlich zu einem weltanschaulichen Pluralismus bekennen, müßte sie immer gewärtig sein, daß ihr Machtmonopol in Frage gestellt wird. Hier ist wohl der eigentliche Grund dafür zu suchen, daß jegliche Tendenz in Richtung einer ideologischen Koexistenz von der sowjetischen Führung als absolut untragbar empfunden wird.

Aus all den obigen Untersuchungen ergeben sich nun sehr wesentliche Folgerungen für das Problem der Evangelisation in einer marxistischen Umwelt. Eine erste Folgerung ist die, daß alle Fragen, die das Verhältnis des Marxismus zur Religion betreffen, in einer sehr differenzierten Weise angegangen werden müssen. Ausdrücke, wie z. B. « Der Marxismus lehrt ... », « Der Marxismus steht auf dem Standpunkt, daß ... » u. ä. sollten in diesem Zusammenhang nicht mehr Verwendung finden. Je nach dem, ob ein Anhänger des Marxismus weltanschaulich auf dem Boden der Anthropologie des jungen Marx steht oder auf dem Boden des dialektischen Materialismus, oder ob er sich nur zum historischen Materialismus bekennt oder den Marxismus gar nur als eine rein wirtschaftliche und politische Lehre betrachtet, stellt sich für ihn die religiöse Frage in sehr verschiedener Weise. Und umgekehrt ergibt sich auch für den religiösen Menschen im Dialog mit dem Marxisten die Notwendigkeit, den verschiedenen Arten von marxistischer Weltanschauung in differenzierter Weise zu begegnen. Dies hat insbesondere auch für das Problem der Evangelisation seine Wichtigkeit. Einige wenige Hinweise sollen noch kurz die Richtung andeuten, in der hier unseres Erachtens vorzugehen wäre.

Der Dialog mit dem humanistisch orientierten Marxisten wird sich vor allem um das Problem des Verhältnisses von Gott und Welt bewegen müssen, sowie um das Problem der Begründbarkeit eines Humanismus ohne Gott. Was das erste Problem betrifft, so hat der humanistisch orientierte Marxismus, wie wir gesehen haben, von Feuerbach die Sicht Gottes als Produkt der Selbstentfremdung des Menschen geerbt: Der Mensch setzt sich sein eigenes, idealisiertes Wesen in der Gestalt Gottes als ein *anderes* Wesen entgegen[14]. Diesen Dualismus will Marx, wie

[14] L. Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, S. 17.

schon Feuerbach, dadurch überwinden, daß er die Idee Gottes zur Illusion erklärt und das in ihr entfremdete Wesen des Menschen in denselben zurückverlegt. Der Religion wird hier unterschoben, Gott und Mensch in ein Konkurrenzverhältnis zu einander zusetzen: « Gott ist nicht, was der Mensch ist — der Mensch ist nicht, was Gott ist »[15]. Ein so gefaßter, ausschließlicher Dualismus entspricht jedoch zum mindesten nicht der christlichen Auffassung des Verhältnisses von Gott und Mensch. Im christlichen Verständnis dieses Verhältnisses hängt der Mensch infolge seiner Kontingenz als Geschöpf mit allen Fasern seines Seins an Gott. Die Scholastik sprach vom « ens ab alio ». Es sollte jedoch besser nicht von einem « ens ab alio » sondern von einem « ens a Deo » gesprochen werden, um die Einzigartigkeit dieses Abhängigkeitsverhältnisses zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Dieser Bezug ist nicht etwas äußerlich zu dem in seinem Sein schon konstituierten Menschen Hinzutretendes, vielmehr macht er das Sein des Menschen selbst aus. Und infolge dieses « Seins von Gott », dieser seiner absoluten Abhängigkeit von Gott, ist der Mensch zugleich ein « Sein für Gott » oder ein « Sein zu Gott ». « Aus » und « zu » sind nur zwei verschiedene Aspekte ein und derselben Wirklichkeit. Diese Dynamik der menschlichen Existenz kann der Bewegung längs einer Kreisbahn verglichen werden, wo jeder Schritt weg vom Ausgangspunkt zugleich schon ein Schritt der Rückkehr zu ihn ist. Diese absolute Abhängigkeit von Gott bedeutet nichts weniger als eine Entfremdung des Menschen, im Gegenteil erst in diesem « Für-Gott-Sein » ist der Mensch vollends bei sich, vollends er selbst.

Damit ist eigentlich auch schon das Wesentliche zu dem zweiten oben genannten Problem gesagt, zum Problem der Begründbarkeit eines Humanismus ohne Gott. Ein besonderer und besonders wichtiger Aspekt dieses Problems ist das Verhalten zum Mitmenschen. Der Marxismus in wohl allen seinen Spielarten betrachtet den Menschen als ein gesellschaftliches Wesen und verlangt deswegen ein restloses Engagement für den Mitmenschen und für die Gesellschaft bis zum Opfer des eigenen Lebens. Es soll hier nicht bestritten werden, daß viele Marxisten dieses Opfer zu bringen auch ohne Glauben an Gott imstande waren und noch sind. Die Frage ist nur, ob dies innerlich sinnvoll ist. Wie erhält die Werthaftigkeit der Selbstaufopferung für die zukünftigen Generationen ihre Begründung? Setzt das Opfer seiner selbst nicht einen höheren Wert voraus, für den ich mein Leben zum Opfer bringe? Werden aber die Generationen der Zukunft einen solchen höheren Wert darstellen? Und wie kann ich wissen, daß sie sich dessen würdig erweisen werden? Ist nicht vielmehr zu befürchten, daß infolge eines Lebens in Wohlstand und Sattheit die zukünftige Menschheit moralisch tiefer stehen wird als die heutigen Menschen, die ihr Leben für sie zum Opfer bringen? Und wenn die Werthaftigkeit der Selbstaufopferung nicht mehr aus den Menschen, für die ich mich opfere, sondern aus dem « Altruismus » als solchem begründet wird: geht nicht ein « Altruismus » ohne einen « alter », ohne ein personales Gegenüber, ins Leere? Erhält er nicht nur unter *der* Bedingung einen Sinn, daß an Stelle der Menschen der Zukunft ein personales Absolutes zum letzten Ziel meiner Hingabe gemacht wird, aus welchem jeder einzelne Mensch seinen Wert erhält und welches meinem Opfer für den Mitmenschen auch dann seinen Wert verleiht, wenn dieser selbst dessen nicht würdig ist? Ohne die Annahme eines personalen Absoluten, d. h. ohne Gott, gibt es schlechthin keinen Wert, der ein Engagement letztlich sinnvoll machen könnte. Ohne Engagement gibt es aber auch kein vollwertiges Menschsein.

Eine praktische Folgerung aus diesem Gedanken darf hier nicht übergangen werden: wenn wir es erleben können, daß Atheisten, die diesen Glauben und die aus ihm sich ergebende Hoffnung nicht besitzen, in der Praxis oft eine bis zur Aufopferung des Lebens gehende Liebe zum Mitmenschen an den Tag legen, so haben die religiös Glaubenden allen Grund, ihnen an Engagement für den Nächsten nicht nachzustehen. Erst daraus wird auch ihre Verkündigung volle Glaubwürdigkeit erlangen.

Diese Probleme, besonders das zuletzt behandelte, stellen sich wohl auch im Dialog mit dem auf dem Boden des dialektischen Materialismus stehenden Marxisten. Es kommen jedoch hier noch andere hinzu auf Grund seiner mehr szientistischen Ausrichtung. Der dialektische Materialismus argumentiert gegen die Religion und den Gottesglauben mit Vorliebe auf Grund naturwissenschaftlicher Gegebenheiten, um darzutun, daß Wissenschaft und Religion unvereinbar seien. Einen Punkt berührten wir schon in den obigen Darlegungen: die Annahme eines

[15] Ebenda.

Schöpfergottes soll durch den Nachweis der zeitlichen Anfanglosigkeit des Universums widerlegt sein. Dieser Beweisführung kann geradezu paradigmatische Bedeutung für die prinzipiellen Schwächen der dialektisch-materialistischen Argumentation gegen die Religion beigemessen werden. Zum ersten liegt ihr, wie auch vielen anderen Einwänden gegen eine religiöse Weltsicht, ein falsches Verständnis der religiösen Position zugrunde: nicht ein zeitlicher Anfang der Welt ist für die Gottesbeweise der Scholastik Ausgangspunkt, sondern der Aufweis der Kontingenz der Welt. Und zweitens wird in dieser Argumentation der letztlich apriorische und dogmatische Charakter des dialektischen Materialismus sichtbar. Obwohl beim gegenwärtigen Entwicklungsstand der Wissenschaft die Frage eines zeitlichen Anfanges der Welt unentscheidbar ist, trägt der dialektische Materialismus seine diesbezügliche Auffassung nicht als Hypothese, sondern — unter Berufung auf eben diese Wissenschaft — als feststehende These vor, die er nicht einmal von der Wissenschaft selbst in Frage stellen läßt.

Wieder anders stellt sich das Problem des Dialoges mit jener Form von Marxismus, dessen theoretische Grundlage sich auf den historischen Materialismus beschränkt ohne Einschluß des dialektischen Materialismus. Es dürfte nicht schwer sein, einem Marxisten dieser Richtung klar zu machen, daß der historische Materialismus keinen Materialismus im philosophischen Sinne besagt und sich daher der Religion gegenüber neutral verhalten könnte. Eine solche Einstellung scheint uns sogar möglich, unabhängig davon, ob die in unseren Untersuchungen vertretene These angenommen wird oder nicht, wonach der Marxismus die Möglichkeit hätte, ohne dem historischen Materialismus untreu werden zu müssen, die Religion als einen authentisch menschlichen Wert anzuerkennen.

Würde sich diese These jedoch durchsetzen, insbesondere in den Ländern, wo der Marxismus die politische Macht innehat, so wäre grundsätzlich die Basis für eine « friedliche Koexistenz » zwischen Marxismus und Religion gelegt, die nicht nur auf politischen Opportunitätserwägungen beruht. Erst dann könnten sich die Anhänger der verschiedenen Religionen in einem marxistisch regierten Lande als gleichberechtigte Bürger beheimatet fühlen.

IMPRIMI POTEST: Romae, die 24 Februarii 1975 - R. P. HERVÉ CARRIER, *Rector Universitatis*

Con approvazione del Vicariato di Roma in data 7 Marzo 1975

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